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The Shape of Things

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THE SINKING OF AN AMERICAN GUNBOAT by Japanese bombs, and of three other American ships containing American refugees, will be exploited to the utmost by groups urging divergent policies on the United States. Supporters of the Neutrality Act will seize upon the incident as final proof of the desirability of withdrawing our naval forces from China, and will ignore the plain fact that the gunboat was being used to evacuate American citizens from the Chinese capital. Professional patriots, on the other hand, may be expected to call for armed retaliation against Japan's unjustified attack. We are confident, however, that the Administration will be wise enough to resist pressure from both extremes. Application of the Neutrality Act under such circumstances would imply abject surrender to Japanese arms; war is not only unthinkable but would be the height of folly. If the United States has a quarrel with Japan, it is one that is shared by all civilized peoples and is based on a common hatred of lawlessness and aggression. But lawlessness and aggression can only be stamped out by the creation of an effective international mechanism for the enforcement of peace. Instead of provoking the growth of either isolationist or war sentiment, the Nanking incident should serve to arouse American public opinion to the need for joining the other powers in collective economic action to restrain aggression.

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ITALY'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE LEAGUE IS significant chiefly as a symbol of the ever-widening breach between the fascist powers and the rest of the civilized world. The League has perhaps never been very effective as an agency for the enforcement of peace, but it has represented the collective aspirations of mankind for a warless world. Italy and Japan have withdrawn, not because the League was weak, but because it tried, however ineffectually, to live up to the ideal for which it was created. From a practical standpoint Mussolini's gesture will have no immediate effect. Italy has had little to do with Geneva since the League denounced the invasion of Ethiopia two years ago, and its withdrawal was foreshadowed months ago. Friends of the League, however, cannot but regret that the organization which was intended to serve all nations has been forced into a position where it represents one of two conflicting factions.

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Yet in so far as the League is an attempt to extend the principles of democracy and law to the international sphere, it is only consistent that it should be repudiated by the governments which have turned their backs on democracy at home.

*

THE LEGISLATIVE MILLS ARE STILL FAR TOO slow in their grinding as the special session of Congress comes to an end. Only the wage-hour bill is likely to pass, and that in a form even worse than the one we commented on last week. Mrs. Norton's new proposal, which vests power seemingly in a Department of Labor administrator, but actually in committees of workers, employers, and consumers, is a throwback to the dark NRA days when labor and industry horsetraded at the consumer's expense. The farm bill, discussed elsewhere in this issue, is likely to hold over to January, and the chances are that it will be pretty much the House version that will emerge from conference. This means soil-conservation payments and loans at first, then parity payments and penalty taxes for exceeding market quotas. We wish the present session godspeed, and we hope the new session will come to grips with the basic economic problem of the relation of price to volume of production. Let us hear more about the Federal Trade Commission and the anti-trust suits of the Department of Justice. It is time the Administration made the attack that Mr. Roosevelt has been promising on the high cost of living.

*

A DIPLOMATIC SHAKE-UP, AMOUNTING TO something like a revolution, is taking place in our legations. New envoys are slated to go to Berlin, London, Vienna, and probably Moscow. One of these changes we regret deeply—the resignation of William E. Dodd as ambassador to Germany. The Nazis have been making life miserable for Mr. Dodd, who, as a humanist and a genuine believer in Jeffersonian democracy, was a continual barb to the Nazi conscience and an insurmountable stumbling-block in the path of their attempts to woo America, as they have been wooing England. We shall watch Hugh Wilson's tenure of the post carefully for any sign of "pacification" of the Nazis. The coming appointment of Joseph P. Kennedy to the London post vacated by Robert Bingham is a net gain. Like Mr. Villard, in his comment elsewhere in this issue, we dislike millionaires in American embassies. Nevertheless, if you must have a millionaire, Mr. Kennedy is better than most. He has proved himself to have personal tact, political astuteness, and a grasp of economic realities. He is no liberal, and his ability has been over-ballyhooed, but he will make a good ambassador. As for Mr. Davies, if he goes to Vienna he will be getting away from what must seem to him the wasteland of Moscow, closer to the social centers of the Continent. Together these three transfers must be regarded not as accidental but as a sign that the Administration is jittery about the foreign outlook and wants to strengthen its diplomatic outposts.

A NEW MARTYR WAS ADDED TO THE CAUSE of freedom of speech as interpreted by the anti-labor newspaper publishers when Hartley W. Barclay last week defied the subpoena of the National Labor Relations Board. We have seen a copy of the eulogy of Weirton composed by Mr. Barclay and printed in *Mill and Factory,* a trade weekly. The copy we have is a reprint, and 25,000 of them—on smooth paper with photographs—would cost a pretty penny. The Weirton one meets in its twenty pages is not the dreary town one descends to by actual road through the hills of West Virginia. It is a smooth-paper town where workers "earn average daily wages of $15, $18, $23, and on up to $30," where 80 per cent of the homes are owned outright, "most of them without mortgages" by employees who are as happy as larks. The Hatchet Gang which has terrorized Weirton workers for years does not appear in this account, but the C. I. O. and the N. L. R. B. are subjected to comment as slanderous as it is inaccurate. It is, in a word, the kind of story a millowner opposed to unionization would like to see widely distributed. The N. L. R. B. has not raised the question of the right of *Mill and Factory* to print such an article. We quote from the actual record of the board inquiry, from the statement by the board's counsel:

> We are not concerned here with whether or not what appeared in this article is or is not true, . . . The issue is whether the board's exhibit 670 [the *Mill and Factory* reprint] was the creation of the Weirton Steel Company directly or indirectly, whether or not it was created for the purpose, Your Honor, of being circulated and distributed among the employees, for the purpose of interfering with the rights of those employees, contrary to the National Labor Relations Act.

This should be explicit enough to rid any mind of fears that the freedom of the press is being threatened. The board is concerned not with Barclay—nothing can happen to Barclay—but with Weir and the Labor Act.

*

NEW YORK'S COURT OF APPEALS HAS HANDED down a decision which labor and employer alike have awaited with some anxiety. The question at issue was whether or not a court could restrain persons from picketing a retail store for selling the products of a manufacturer involved in a labor dispute. Labor maintained there was no other way of calling the dispute to the attention of the public, since the retail store is the public's only point of contact with the manufacturer's product; employers, on the other hand, shouted "secondary boycott." The decision of the state's highest court is fundamentally a victory for labor. It upholds an injunction granted by a lower court against the pickets but so modifies the order as to make it meaningless. Specifically the decision recognizes the legality of picketing a retailer not involved in a labor dispute, provided the picketing is directed against the product and not against the store itself, and provided there is a "unity of interest" between the manufacturer and retailer, which, as far as the court indicated, means that they must be "in the same line of business." A considerable body of *obiter dicta* accompanied the decision,

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attempting to define "peaceful picketing" and urging that illegal picketing be "sternly suppressed by the police," but as these observations were not an integral part of the decision, they are not regarded as binding in the sense of legal precedent. Unfortunately the decision resulted in no clear-cut definition of secondary boycott, and from the concurring and dissenting opinions it is apparent that the court itself is of several minds on that important point. An encouraging aspect of the opinion is the recognition that New York's counterpart of the federal anti-injunction law is applicable even in cases where a picketed party is not himself involved in a labor dispute.

*

AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE INSURANCE law has been proposed by Louis I. Pink, New York State's progressive Insurance Commissioner, to legalize cooperative organizations that furnish their members with medical and hospital care for small fixed weekly or monthly payments. Providing practice by a group of doctors, with common laboratory and X-ray equipment, the plan, highly successful in other states, makes possible professional competence which the individual doctor can never achieve, and at the same time relieves doctor and patient of financial hazards. In spite of its obvious advantages to both the public and the medical profession, the New York State Medical Society and the five county medical societies of New York City sent representatives to a legislative public hearing last week to urge that only such organizations be permitted as would give "free choice of physicians" to subscribers. This would, of course, rule out "group practice." During the hearing the chairman of the legislative committee, Assemblyman Piper, made the astonishing admission that "no measure opposed by the medical societies has a chance of passage at Albany." It is high time the public made it plain to the legislature that it has more votes than the reactionary medical bureaucracy, and that it has a better claim than the doctors to decide how medical service shall be organized. After all, the patient stakes his health and often his life on the contract for medical care—and he also pays the bill.

*

MRS. FLIBBITY AND MRS. FLAHERTY ARE two cleaning women. One works in a district relief office and one in a child-welfare bureau, both of which, surprising though it seems, are presided over by Mrs. Caroline Slade, who also writes books and things and so must be excused for not keeping very regular office hours. Mrs. Flibbity and Mrs. Flaherty would have liked to become social workers themselves, but since they hadn't gone to college, they were cleaning women instead. The amazing thing is that both of them decided to take a flier in social work almost simultaneously. In Mrs. Slade's absence from her desk, Mrs. Flibbity put down on paper in frank and ungrammatical detail all the miserable fortunes of Mrs. Jones, an applicant for relief; Mrs. Flaherty, more ambitious, reported on the complicated troubles of Mrs. A., Mrs. K., Mrs. J., Mrs. L., and Mrs. Y. Both left with their reports charming notes to Mrs. Slade explaining their flights into the higher values of case history, surprisingly similar and synchronized, and Mrs. Slade sent the two documents to different weekly magazines. Imagine Mrs. Flibbity's and Mrs. Flaherty's surprise last week when they saw themselves in print, one in the *New Yorker* and one in the *New Republic*—with Mrs. Slade's name rather unaccountably attached to each effort. They must have been pleased to death because it all goes to show that you don't need to have no college education to get your writings printed in the magazines. You don't need nothing but a little gall.

*

ALFRED P. SLOAN'S TEN-MILLION-DOLLAR gift endowing a foundation for research in "basic economic truth" is one more manifestation of what amounts to an epidemic of business generosity and civic-mindedness. We have been noticing recently that all sorts of upstanding vice-presidents of banks and chairmen of industrial boards have been popping up in the newspapers as heads of hospital drives and other philanthropic movements. This puzzled us until we found out that one of the leading public-relations firms, specializing in big-business clientele, had evolved this new technique for changing the business man from a black symbol to a white one in the public mind. The technique seems to have broadened into a campaign. If we were a hospital or a symphony orchestra or some other sort of deficit institution hungering for a financial sponsor, we should know that now is the time to make hay.

*

EVIDENCE THAT THE BOYCOTT AGAINST SILK goods is gaining support all over the country continues to come into our office. At Cornell University a careful poll showed that three-fourths of the faculty and four-fifths of the retired professors favored a consumers' boycott of Japanese goods as an immediate practical step for curbing aggression. . . . New York staged an anti-silk parade on December 11 in which nearly a thousand friends of peace participated. . . . Frances Farmer, leading lady in Clifford Odets's latest play "Golden Boy," is said in the program to be wearing lisle hose, an example which has been followed by the cast of "The Women," another New York hit. . . . Several firms, including the Priestley Knit Goods Company, have recently announced the manufacture of full-fashioned hose made of rayon and other synthetic silks. . . . One of the leading chemical firms of the country has retained the services of a noted scientist to work on a new substitute for silk. . . . A group of undergraduates at the Johns Hopkins Medical School recently instituted a secondary boycott of their own; they won't go out with nurses who wear silk stockings! . . . Most striking of all was the poll taken by the *National Consumer News* among families with incomes of less than $2,500. Of those approached 83 per cent said they would refuse to buy Japanese goods even if they were cheaper and better than competing lines.

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A World the Farmer Never Made

THE special Congressional session, called primarily to pass a farm bill, will undoubtedly end in the Christmas holidays without having completed its job. The House and Senate will each have passed its own bill. But the divergences between them are so great as to leave a good deal of ironing work for the conference committee, which will carry over to the January session.

It is a basic paradox of the capitalist structure that the harder the farmer works and the more he produces, the smaller his own income is. The depression hit the farmers more than a decade before it hit the industrial areas. A combination of factors accounted for this: first, a loss of the world export markets for American farm products; and second, an improvement in agricultural techniques which heightened the farm yields and brought a glut of production. These factors caused a price drop immediately after the war which sent the farmer's income spiraling downward. And the lower the spiral dropped the more feverish became the farmer's efforts to combat it by the device of increasing his production—a device that caused an even sharper price dip. When the industrial depression merged with the farm depression at the end of the twenties, another factor was added in the form of a decrease in the purchasing power of the working masses. The iron ring around the farmer drew even tighter when the ups and downs of farm prices were accentuated by the activities of speculators in the commodity markets. And the cycle was completed when soil erosion, drought, and exhausted fertility, without solving the problem of the general glut, reduced the smaller farmers and the tenants and croppers, especially in the South and West, to abject poverty. The farmer was a tragic victim of the impersonal forces of the capitalist market, helpless in a world he never made.

The last two decades have seen a whole series of attempts to relieve his condition—first, through cooperative marketing; second, through the McNary-Haugen export-subsidy plan, twice vetoed by President Coolidge; third, through the catastrophic operations of the Federal Farm Board, which spent hundreds of millions pegging cotton and wheat prices in the open market, with a liberality which benefited the farmers less than the speculators; and finally, through the crop controls and the domestic-allotment plan of the AAA, which achieved higher farm incomes at the expense of consumers. Whatever else may be said of the AAA, there can be little doubt that it came closer to being farm relief than any of its predecessors.

Of the two versions, the House plan seems to us far superior to the Senate bill. It has been drawn with greater care and ability and is less restrictive. In its eighty-six pages, without the amendments that have come thick as hailstones, it sets up a series of marketing-quota procedures for the five major crops—tobacco, field corn (linked with the whole livestock market), wheat, cotton, and rice. The Secretary of Agriculture is given wide and flexible powers at the opening of each crop year to fix a marketing quota for the crop, to set up machinery for apportioning it among states and counties, to set aside a surplus for the ever-normal-granary carry-over from year to year, to reward the farmers by crop loans and benefit payments for living up to the control plan, and to apply legal penalties when they violate either the marketing or surplus quotas. The plan as a whole distinguishes between crops, it sets up an effective enforcement machinery, and it gives latitude for flexible administration to the Secretary. The Senate plan calls for more restriction of both the farmer and the farm administration.

Both plans, however, suffer from basic weaknesses and contradictions. They are presumably based on the principle of seeking to effect a balance—between the crops, between seasonal peaks and valleys of production, between farm prices and industrial prices, between the domestic and the world markets. In this respect the House bill is significant, because the goals that it sets for itself are the goals that all economic planning must set—of an adjusted balance arrived at through administrative flexibility of control. But there are two glaring defects. First, the balance is set in a scarcity economy rather than in an economy of abundance, and does not look forward to anything except a scarcity economy. Second, the controls operate chiefly in the interest of the larger farmers and accentuate the existing inequalities of income within the farming population itself.

It was left to Senator Borah to expose most effectively in the Congressional debates the paradox of legislating agricultural scarcity in an economy in which the working masses need the very products that are being curtailed. Senator Borah suggested that the government buy up the farm surplus, instead, and use it for feeding and clothing the people. All praise to him for having the courage to reveal the weakness of the whole plan. But what Senator Borah refuses to face is that the government cannot legislate an economy of farm abundance without premising an industrial economy of the same sort. If the government were to buy up the cotton surplus of some 13 million bales or the wheat surplus of some 150 million bushels, it would not only have to make huge expenditures, but it would have to face the problem of making cotton cloth or bread. If it left that to private enterprise, the cost spread would be four or five times the original cost of the crops. Only a socialized industrial system could tackle the job. And only a government that had the courage to socialize industry could resolve the contradiction of crop limitation in a time of need.

Because the whole farming industry has got a raw deal under capitalism, progressives have had a tendency to favor any plan that raised farm income. But it is now time to recognize that all benefit-payment schemes favor the large landowners and sharpen the disparity between them and the underlying farm population. For the farm benefits are apportioned not according to need but according to amount of land withheld from cultivation. And that means that the poorest farmers and sharecroppers get the least government aid. The present farm

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plan does not dare do anything else, because it does not dare disturb the system of vested interests in farming.

A rational farm plan today would include crop controls and the ever-normal granary, despite the absurd charges of dictatorship that always come from the right. But it would use the minimum amount of money for crop benefits. It would divert the largest share of the funds to direct farm relief, in proportion to need. It would exempt the small farmers from land taxes and would lower for them the interest rates on loans. It would put the apportionment of farm benefits into the hands of local groups in which the poorer farmers had express representation. It would seek to build larger export markets by lowering tariff rates. But such a plan would finally depend on the widening of the domestic market through the socialization of industry.

Organized Hatred

THE National Association of Manufacturers met in New York City last week in a "Congress of American Industry." If this wishful title had a sound reminiscent of the corporative system of industrial representation in Mussolini's Italy, the raven remarks of various keynote speakers were even more so. Virgil Jordan, down-in-the-mouth president of the National Industrial Conference Board, croaked of "another" inflation. "Whether the outcome," he groaned, "will be the fascist or communist form of collectivism, no one can be sure." By comparison the speech of Lammot du Pont was a chirp of hope. He asked only that the labor situation be stabilized and that tax uncertainties be ended. "As long as the law-making mills grind, the fog of uncertainty mocks the industrial planner." As for unemployment, he saw the possibility of creating 3,000,000 new jobs in industry, and seemed to feel that an ultimate solution would be found in a fall of population!

Just how the legislative grinding is to be stopped in a democracy, Mr. du Pont did not say. But he and all his friends in the N. A. M. had very positive ideas on how the labor and the tax situation were to be stabilized. They were outlined in the plan the N. A. M. issued—which turned out to be the same old plan. Needless to say, it began with Encouragement of Private Initiative, which in fact states the theme of the whole congress. And it was a foregone conclusion that the two sections of the plan on which the planners seemed to have spent the most loving care were those pertaining to labor and "sound government policies."

What business wants in the way of sound government policies is neither new nor surprising. Its program for labor relations surpasses all former efforts and is a direct response to the rise of the C. I. O. Appropriately enough, it was adopted at a session presided over by Walter T. Kohler, at which E. T. Weir was a principal speaker. And its eighteen points, if they were put into effect, would put labor in a vise that would fulfil the fondest dreams of Tom Girdler, who was also present.

In its elaborately detailed program, the N. A. M. advocated that the National Labor Relations Act be amended into complete ineffectiveness; it condemned the closed shop and the use of the check-off under any circumstances; advocated "preventative" justice in labor disputes in the courts, through injunction; suggested that the Byrnes Act be amended to include the banning of "strike-makers," that is, organizers who move from one state to another; and stated that the government's primary obligation is protection of the right to work. This program of specific recommendations for the curbing of labor was larded through with bland statements of the good-will and excellent intentions of management toward employees, of which our favorite is the solemn recommendation that *whenever practical* adequate advance notice be given to employees of any change in the schedule of hours of work.

In the face of the present strength of labor, the recommendations of the N. A. M. might be dismissed as the unrealistic utterances of reactionaries who have learned nothing in the past few years. It is much more sensible to regard them, along with the cries of doom of the Jordans and the Weirs, as a measure of the N. A. M.'s organized hatred of organized labor.

China's Hope

THE flight of Chiang Kai-shek from Nanking has revived rumors of his early retirement and the establishment of a government which would be more "sympathetic" with Japan's ambitions in China. Although the rumors are entirely plausible in that they specify men long notorious for pro-Japanese activities as the probable heirs of Chiang's power, the fact that they come to us from Tokyo, Shanghai, and Berlin makes them suspect. Not a word has come out of the territory controlled by China which can be construed as indicating Chinese surrender. Even the Japanese papers, moreover, have carried reports that Chiang was preparing secondary defense lines as far up the Yangtze as Nanchang and Kiukiang. And if Chiang plans to submit, it is scarcely likely that he would permit Nanking to be destroyed and thousands of Chinese lives to be sacrificed.

The loss of Nanking will temporarily strengthen the hands of men like Wu Ting-chang, until recently Minister of Industry, Chang Tso-pin, the new governor of Anwei, Chang Chun, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Wang Ching-wei, the present Foreign Minister, and Ho Ying-ching, the War Minister, who are known to favor a compromise with Japan. But important as these men are in Chinese political life, it is doubtful whether they could maintain a government, even with the support of Japanese arms. Private letters and confidential reports from the interior of China stress the remarkable unity of the country in opposing Japanese aggression. And all the evidence indicates that the determination to resist has been increased rather than diminished by the Japanese capture of Shanghai and the attack on Nanking. Although a

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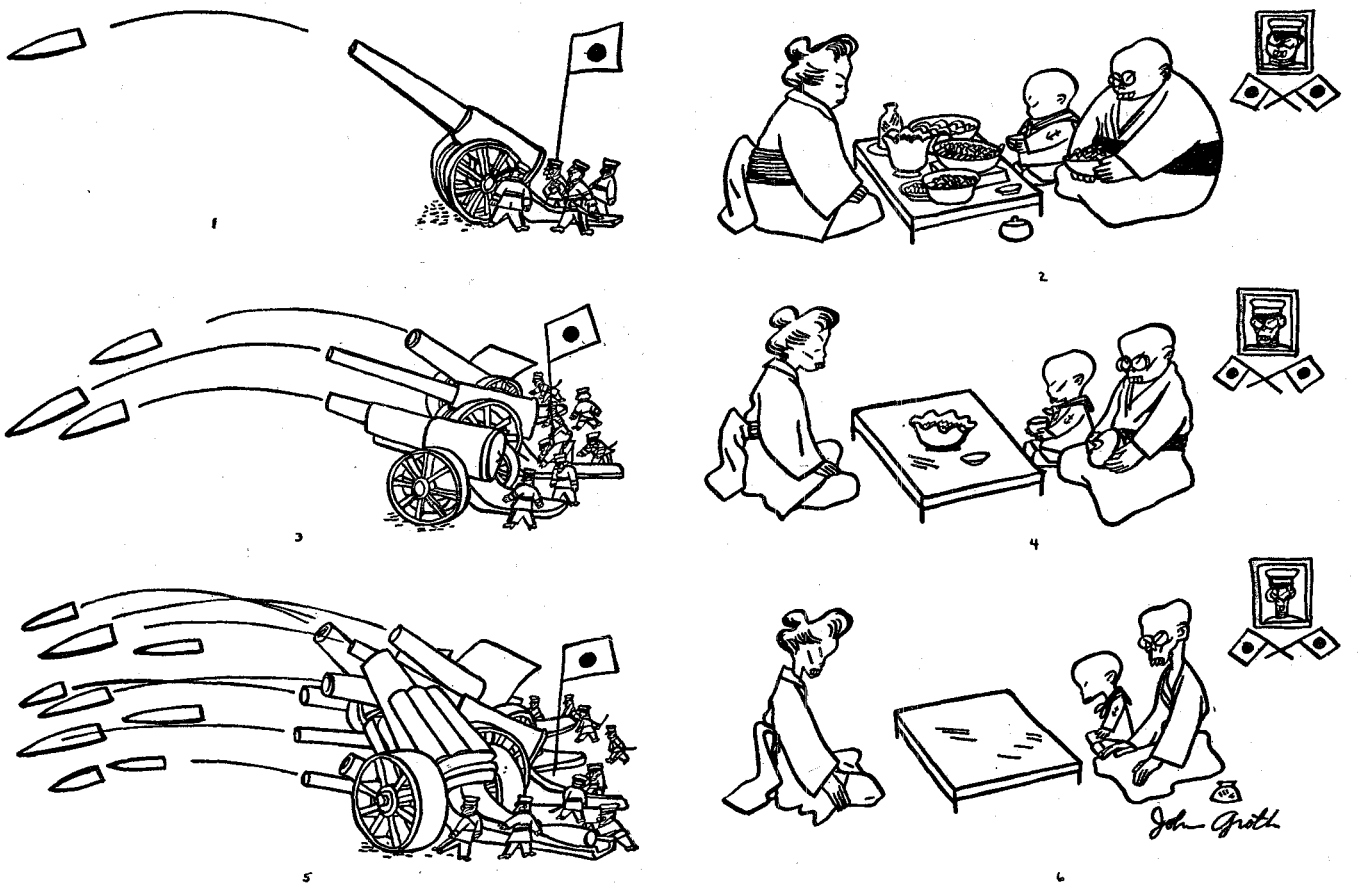
few military leaders are somewhat uncertain in their loyalty, the overwhelming majority—including all the more distinguished generals, such as Feng Yu-hsiang, Pai Chung-hsi, Li Tsung-jen, Chang Fa-kwei, and Tang Sheng-chi—have exhibited a unity unprecedented in recent Chinese history. Moreover, the Communist leaders, who have been foremost in urging resistance to Japan, are apparently gaining in influence.

The Japanese criticism of Chinese military strategy in the south, as expressed by Hallett Abend of the *Times*, seems justified. Largely for the sake of "face," the Nanking generals carried their resistance at Shanghai and Nanking to the point of endangering their entire army. But in the north the guerrilla tactics of the former Red Army, while not so spectacular, are bearing fruit. During the past month the Japanese have made no gains, and in some instances they have been forced to withdraw from areas previously occupied because of threats to their lines of communication. Columns of the Chinese Eighth Route Army are known to be operating within forty miles of Peiping. Even if the Japanese should succeed in establishing a puppet government at the former capital, its rule would be limited to the cities and railway zones which are directly under Japanese military control.

While the rising prestige of the Communist leaders—Chu Teh, Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai, and Lin Piao—may not be widely recognized among the masses of the population outside the former Soviet areas, it is a bulwark against a possible coup by the pro-Japanese clique. It also increases the possibility that Chiang may tear a leaf from their notebook and develop guerrilla tactics in the south. But Chiang's problem is not merely one of shifting from positional to semi-guerrilla warfare; he must also arm and train the masses to supplement the regular troops in defense. In the north the Eighth Route Army, without a large number of troops at its disposal, has greatly strengthened its position by organizing and directing the peasants to harass the enemy lines of communication. This is a task which calls for skill and experience, an experience which only the former Communists possess. In order to win, Chiang must swallow his pride and call upon the assistance of those who were formerly his bitterest enemies.

There is every reason to believe that he will do this rather than surrender. Prominent Chinese newspapers have been urging such a shift in tactics. And if the Japanese army carries out its threat of advancing on Hankow, 600 miles up the Yangtze, the opportunity will be too obvious to miss. If the Chinese blundered in attempting to defend Shanghai under the guns of the Japanese fleet, the Japanese would be equally foolish to carry their attack to an interior city a thousand miles from their base of supplies. Yet modesty has never been a characteristic of the Japanese military leaders, and the Japanese passion for "face" may prove their undoing. China has not yet begun to tap its full resources for defense. The primary cause for concern, therefore, is political: can China rid itself of traitors and settle down to a war of endurance, in which it will have every reason to hope for ultimate success?



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Roosevelt's Next Move

BY MAX LERNER

Washington, December 11

I DON'T know how long it will take Mr. Roosevelt to swing left again, but there are some signs that such a move is in the offing. What is chiefly vague is the timing—always important with the President. Thus far, in coping with the depression, his courage has been tentative and wary. He has played a shrewd game, which is very different from saying it has been a wise one. A President with a firmer grasp of economics and a clearer social philosophy would have acted more decisively. A President with less courage and strength would have yielded and turned the country back to the Wall Street Indians. Mr. Roosevelt did neither, nor has he rejected either as a possibility. If you will examine what has been said, not for, to, and about him, but by him, you will find that he has been careful to make no actual concessions or threats. Instead, the Washington air is cluttered with trial balloons, streaked with every color in the political rainbow and filled with every gaseous mixture in the political laboratory.

Actually Mr. Roosevelt has been shrewd enough to keep both roads open—that of further conciliation of business and that of drastic governmental action. It is beginning to look as if he might in time take the second. To my mind the most important element influencing his decision will be the figures revealed by the unemployment census made under Mr. Biggers, which promise to be shocking. The totals have not yet been revealed, but I learn from reliable sources that they are far higher than anticipated. Biggers has had their accuracy checked by a house-to-house canvass in fifty sample areas.

Another factor is the sharp reaction here to the fantastic stupidities of the speeches and resolutions at the convention in New York of the National Association of Manufacturers. Nor have the business promises of increased expenditures and employment materialized. Instead, the lay-offs have gone right on. And Congress, which had been adjured by the tories of finance and press to declare its independence of the Executive, has shown a complete lack of competence and direction.

The best opinion here holds that the President is waiting for certain trends to crystallize before taking action. He is waiting for a sense of the Congressional futility to sink in on people. He is waiting also for reactions to his newly acquired austerity about budget-balancing. He would prefer to have the demand for spending imposed on him rather than impose it. That demand has already come from the progressives. It is beginning to come from Congress. This is the meaning of the President's insistence that the agricultural subsidies be limited and the road-building funds curtailed. He has struck there at the two most vulnerable points in the Congressional armor. And finally, the demand for spending is beginning to come from business circles. I mentioned in my last dispatch that a split was to be expected in business sentiment about budget-balancing. I learn now from a source in the Treasury that business men are writing in to question the wisdom of Mr. Morgenthau's rigid devotion to the budget. And even the *Wall Street Journal* is calling for larger expenditures, on the ground that the country associates economy with bearishness.

It would not be surprising if Mr. Roosevelt were to take occasion early in the session of the new Congress to point out to the country that new hope can lie only in renewed social energies. He might say that he had yielded to the pressure for budget-balancing and had withdrawn executive control from Congress, giving Congress all the rope it could use, and that both moves had failed; that the same fellows who ran us into the trough in 1929 were still in command in the strategic centers of finance and had learned nothing in the interval; that since a small handful of men still control the financial structure, "business confidence" means merely the confidence of these men that they will get what they want; that what they want is complete economic power, which we cannot give them without giving up our democracy; that the unemployment figures and the record of recent business activity show that business will cooperate only on its own autocratic terms; and that if the alternative is government spending, and government action to break the grip of the big corporations on price and volume of production, such an alternative must be faced.

All of which may or may not happen; the course of events and the nature of Mr. Roosevelt's mind are both too undependable for prophecy. Whatever the President does, however, the administrative demoralization in Washington has gone far. The hard fact is that if he ever decides to renew the vast administrative efforts of the early New Deal he will not have the personnel to do it with. He made his big mistake when he announced after the elections in 1936 that there would be no changes in his official family. This came as a surprise even to the Cabinet, several of whom were expecting a shake-up. As things stand now, the Cabinet picture is dolorous. Woodring, in the War post, is of small caliber, and Roosevelt knew it when he gave him only a temporary appointment. Swanson, in the Navy, is a sick old man. Roper is a pathetic case of a rickety Cabinet annex to big business. Cummings is a weak and good-natured politician, ridden by less scrupulous political favorites. Farley is thinking mainly of retiring and mending his fences. Morgenthau is conscientious but a misfit, and has no conception of the power the Treasury could wield

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in the present crisis. Miss Perkins has done a better job than her enemies credit her with, but she has not the confidence of either side in the labor struggle—and that is fatal. Wallace is intelligent and earnest, but he is now primarily a candidate for 1940. Ickes is honest, militantly progressive—and riddled with pettinesses. Hull is a prisoner in a State Department that is split between liberal and reactionary groups. Never has a President faced so huge a task with so mediocre a Cabinet.

The Kennedy build-up has been a very instructive one. If Joe were not a Catholic, he would have Presidential chances, since he has the reputation of being an economic trouble-shooter. His chief job in his new London post will be not only the trade pact but two other economic items. One is the need for negotiations on the inroads that the British have made into the American carrying trade; unless we can win a quota from them, our plans for a merchant marine must founder. The second concerns the raids that the London Exchange has been making on our own Stock Exchange, which demand the establishment by comity of rules that both groups will observe. Because of his Maritime Commission and SEC experience, Joe became the logical man for the post. As an Irish Catholic, he should derive extra satisfaction from the appointment. It will be the first time one of his faith has represented America at St. James's, and Joe's pride in his origins is not wholly dormant.

Incidentally, the story of why Ambassador Davies didn't get either the London post, which he has been panting for, or even Berlin, seems to center around Sumner Welles. When Davies was a lawyer in Washington, he represented Trujillo, the Dominican President, and once went over Welles's head to Secretary Hull —and got what he wanted. Welles has never forgiven him, and Welles is a power in the Administration.

There is one additional reason why Mr. Roosevelt may have to move left and seek to energize his administrative staff. A clue to it is to be found in a remark which John L. Lewis made to "Cissy" Patterson, but which did not appear in the interview she published in a Washington paper. "If the sixty families won't run this system," Lewis told her, "the hundred million will." Mr. Roosevelt cannot afford to let Lewis steal his political thunder. The trouble, from Lewis's standpoint, is that he is too preoccupied with labor peace to think of political thunder. The principal stumbling-block in the negotiations has become the A. F. of L. Executive Council, which has taken the reins from its committee of three and from William Green himself and is determined to smash the C. I. O. even at the risk of smashing the whole labor movement. I have learned that in the conversations between Green and Lewis, Green was reasonable until there was a meeting of the Executive Council; then he became intransigent. Green has become the mouthpiece of Hutcheson, Wharton, Tobin, Rickert, and Frey. Unless labor unity is achieved, the decisions and indecisions of Roosevelt, and the maneuverings of all the movers and shakers in Washington, become meaningless.

Record of the "Boondogglers"

BY JAMES WECHSLER

I

THE issue of government relief is destined to provoke a momentous battle in Congress. No one, of course, will demand cessation of all federal aid to the unemployed. But reaction, while genially prepared to tolerate older—and much cheaper—methods of benevolence, is determined to scuttle federal work relief. The future of the Works Progress Administration is at stake.

Since its inception this agency has endured remorseless attack. Its critics endeavored from the first to present the unemployed as a shiftless, lazy, inept throng beaten in fair competition. "Boondoggling" was the inflammatory epithet for their activities that went echoing through the Union League Club. Newspaper photographs of men yawning luxuriously while leaning upon their shovels represented the subtleties of such criticism, the burden of which continues to be that WPA is wasteful, that its program is nourishing parasites, and that the nation cannot profit from work relief. The fact is that in an atmosphere of distrust and humiliation WPA workers have fashioned a monumental record. As the handiwork of their first thirteen months, these "parasites" could boast of 29,000 miles of new roads, 1,099 school buildings, 1,440 recreational centers, and 3,350 miles of new trunk and lateral sewers—a construction record which will be greatly augmented when the current inventory is completed. WPA has recaptured, out of the despair of depression, some of the daring and vitality usually identified with an era of expansion.

This survey will neither evaluate the role of a work-relief program in stemming the economic crisis nor dwell upon WPA's significance for the unemployed. It will concentrate on the record, for WPA deserves to be weighed in terms of the enduring service which the unemployed have rendered to the country. By March of this year 136,000 WPA projects had been put in operation. Approximately three-fourths of these ventures can be roughly defined as construction, the remainder being in the spheres of art, recreation, and research. Engaged in these far-flung enterprises at their peak were 3,840,000 people; invested up to last March was $4,000,000,000. What is the tangible return?

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Roads, Highways, Streets

Thanks to the economic breakdown most communities of the United States in 1935 viewed new roads as an unthinkable luxury. Even modest improvement programs, hard enough to sustain in good times, had been abandoned. In little more than a year—from July, 1935, to September, 1936—WPA completed 93,500 miles of road repairs in addition to the 29,000 miles of new construction. Sixty-one thousand miles of neglected dirt road, uncomfortable to the traveler and a deadly handicap to rural communities, were salvaged. WPA's attack on these "farm-to-market" roads is a dramatic endeavor which will be memorable for generations.

In 1935 Tennessee had more than 70,000 miles of county and community roads, only a small number of which had ever been adequately drained or surfaced. Although the state agreed to set aside part of the gasoline tax for road building, the average county could afford only $60 a mile for the work. In July, 1935, WPA agreed to furnish labor and part of the materials for a large-scale program. Early in 1936 eighty-six of the state's ninety-five counties were participating in a road-improvement program designed to permit all-year, all-weather traffic, to open every mail and school bus route, and to link every farmhouse with its nearest market. In that interval more than 20,000 miles of rural roads were widened and repaired, including 3,000 miles of new grades. Hundreds of treated timber bridges were constructed, and several thousand untreated timber culverts and bridges were installed, clearing thousands of miles of right of way. Similar was the exploit in Monroe County, West Virginia, where it was discovered that the route from Rock Camp to Greenville was virtually impassable in severe weather; even in good weather two cars could barely pass each other along this road, which provided the single means of egress for several hundred farms. It remained for WPA to end the blockade and to insure at least mail delivery under all conditions.

In Oregon, thanks to WPA, Portland will soon have two new and valuable outlets to the sea. When the Wilson River and Wolf Creek projects are completed, the distance between Portland and Tillamock, center of a rich dairy and farming community, will have been reduced by more than thirty miles, and swift access will have been made possible to a rich timber area which was almost destroyed by fire in 1933. Both highways attain a height of more than 1,200 feet above sea level, and along their routes are box-like canyons and hills demanding costly excavation and fill. But the work will bring fruitful returns in commerce, in recreation, and in the preservation of timber against devastating forest fires.

The Lake Shore Boulevard project in Cleveland, to consider another example of WPA accomplishments in this sphere, will give that city a four-mile, non-stop highway connecting the heart of the business district with East Cleveland and enabling autoists to avoid miles of traffic-clogged streets. Parallel with the construction of the highway, elaborate park projects will transform the appearance of the area. In New York 433 miles of highway had been repaired or improved by last July. In the whole country 46,000 road, street, and highway projects were under way by June 30 of this year. Along these "farm-to-market" roads and super-highways whole aspects of American life are being altered. The rejected blueprints of decades are being turned into reality. Without WPA assistance they would still be gathering dust in neglected archives.

Public Buildings, Education, and Recreation

During the early years of the depression many persons pointed with horror at America's steadily dwindling educational facilities. Educators lamented the plight of remote communities where "universal education" received lip-service in ancient, cramped rooms which grimly resisted light, could not be adequately heated, and were topped with leaky roofs. Besides building more than 1,000 new school buildings from July, 1935, to September, 1936, WPA was responsible for renovations in 7,176 schools, accommodating nearly 3,000,000 pupils. Happy Valley, Tennessee, was a characteristic settlement in the Southern highlands with a schoolhouse where shivering children were taught not to expect too much. At a cost of only $3,000 WPA replaced the old building with a reasonably modern structure that is now the pride of the valley. In Danbury, Connecticut, the school committee wistfully agreed that school facilities in the Beaver Brook area were shamefully meager; a single, crowded frame building groaned from age and ill-treatment. No funds were available to remedy conditions. A new, well-equipped school now testifies to the "wastefulness" and "uselessness" of WPA. Happy Valley and Beaver Brook in 1935 were symbols of a grave problem about which masters' theses were glumly written. In 1937 they typify the contribution of a federal works program to the nation's welfare. At the end of last June 24,106 projects, costing $475,000,000, were transforming America's educational scene.

Perhaps even more meaningful than WPA's construction projects in the field of schooling is its nation-wide experiment in adult education. No more sweeping war on ignorance and illiteracy has ever been waged in the United States. Up to the end of last May more than 4,000,000 students had attended classes in 600 different subjects, taught by 100,000 unemployed instructors. The teachers invaded rural communities, remote mountain valleys, and city slums, salvaging nearly 1,000,000 people from illiteracy. Workers' education received unprecedented encouragement; more than 120,000 people participated in this aspect of the program. Classes were even held at midnight to accommodate mill workers of the night shift. This phase of WPA activity gains in significance when viewed against the background of a democracy in which 32,000,000 people have received less than an eighth-grade education. Recognition must also be bestowed upon the intelligently managed forums which WPA has sponsored and which frequently have brought debate and an awareness of contemporary problems to areas in which free discussion had long been a shabby myth. These meetings have invariably been thronged. In

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a period of demagogic raids upon a distressed population the value of such sessions is obvious.

The newest health center in the United States—the Carrie Tingley Hospital for Crippled Children at Hot Springs, New Mexico—was dedicated last May. The building, covering 1.8 acres of floor space, is constructed in Spanish colonial style and boasts the most modern facilities. It is a WPA project. On the crest of a Louisiana hill, settled amid pine trees, the G. B. Cooley sanitarium ministers to tuberculosis victims who cannot afford regular hospital fees. It is an attractive, forty-four-room building, and there can be no doubt that it meets an urgent community need. It was made possible by WPA. Throughout the country similarly needed public buildings can be attributed to WPA. Since 1913, when Big Horn County, Montana, was separated from Yellowstone, its officials have been housed in rented office space. Now, after twenty-four years, they possess an imposing $95,000 native-stone county courthouse. At Ohio State University WPA workers are completing another section of the Tower Club, a low-cost, cooperative dormitory for selected students of limited means. An early national inventory disclosed that 155 new hospitals and similar social institutions had risen in underprivileged communities with WPA aid and that 870 old structures had been renovated or rebuilt.

In the wake of every "crime wave" there is an outcry against America's poverty in recreational facilities, yet local indigency rarely fails to block any significant construction. It took WPA just one year to remodel more than 3,000 recreational centers, while 1,440 entirely new edifices were also built. This enterprise cost the nation $335,000,000 in 1936. Its service to national health and morale is incalculable. Jones County, Georgia, to take a typical situation, contained about 8,000 people, living in farmhouses sprawled throughout a broad area. Community life was barren; recreation implied a difficult expedition to the city. Now a 115-acre tract of rolling woodland is being converted into a public recreation center, with a seven-acre artificial lake, community house, athletic fields, and picnic grounds. In Collingswood, New Jersey, a dangerous "old swimming hole" has become a 1,200,000-gallon pool, accommodating many bathers. A new public golf course has been opened in Washoe County, Nevada. In 1933 there were 164 playgrounds in New York City; today there are 313. For all of which, chief thanks is due to WPA.

The most startling advance in provision of recreation, however, is registered in gymnasium construction. The new buildings which have sprung up throughout the country with the help of WPA funds and labor usually combine athletic space with auditorium facilities. In many areas such centers are without precedent. Children are participating in intramural sports for the first time in their lives; and adults who can't afford to be clubmen have a refuge for meetings and cultural activity. When the ancient gymnasium in Fossil, Oregon, was condemned, the inhabitants were deprived of their lone recreation hall; WPA helped to replace it. In the state of Indiana such buildings are finished or under way in about fifteen cities. Four community centers and three gymnasiums are being constructed in West Virginia. This revolution in public recreation was doomed to generations of delay until WPA came to the rescue.

Bridges and Airports

Until 1936 farmers of Highland County, Ohio, were traditionally compelled to ford Rattlesnake Creek with their horses and wagons; automobiles, school buses, and mail trucks, unable to perform that feat, were forced to detour ten miles. A 160-foot steel span, which the locality had never been able to subsidize, now crosses Rattlesnake Creek. The wooden bridge at Jericho in Monroe County was creaking at the age of seventy; at White Oak Creek a span ten years younger was plainly too narrow for modern traffic. Throughout Ohio such relics are rapidly being replaced, and it is WPA that is doing the replacing. Last May Ohio officials reported that 9,295 bridges and culverts had been constructed through WPA funds. And the Ohio record merely typifies WPA accomplishments in this field throughout the nation.

Through last June 940 WPA projects had been launched at 567 airport sites, resulting in the construction of new landing fields which cover 4,000 acres. More than 100 airport runways have been built and 500 municipal airports have been extended and improved. These projects were undertaken at a time when air traffic was reaching new proportions under acute, often perilous limitations. Many of the country's 2,500 landing fields were pleading for modernization when WPA began this work. Others were too small for traffic needs. In the first eleven months of 1935 Cleveland's municipal airport handled 29,522 planes, an increase of 2,000 over the previous year. With space sharply limited, the possibility of disaster was serious. The city, unable to finance improvement, considered curtailment of air traffic. Then WPA stepped in, extended the size of the port to 1,040 acres, and built a large asphalt landing, giving Cleveland perhaps the best equipped field in the country. Similar progress was recorded at the Newark airport. Dramatizing its emphasis upon safety in the air, WPA by last June had placed 7,701 signs and indicators along air-line routes.

"Preventive" Construction

In March, 1936, flood damage in Haverhill, Massachusetts, was estimated at $1,550,000. During the same month the major area of Lowell was miraculously saved from tragedy by "Francis' Folly," an old gate which barely stemmed the surging waters. Other territories have been less fortunate. For when the present is shadowed by depression, "preventive" enterprise is normally forgotten. But it need not be forgotten. Through the winter of 1937 WPA workers toiled at danger points in the Merrimac valley to safeguard populous centers from disastrous flood conditions. Frail barriers like the old Francis Gate were replaced. Whether present plans for protecting the Merrimac and Connecticut valleys attain permanent effectiveness depends upon the continuance of WPA, for no other angels are in sight.

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Elsewhere in the nation such projects have already reached notable dimensions. In thirteen months construction of new levees and embankments on rivers which habitually overflow their banks reached a total length of 107 miles. About 207 miles of old levees were strengthened and enlarged. Records reveal that Kansas is always in danger of receiving less rainfall than the crops require. WPA has made notable progress in a water-conservation scheme which may effectively ward off the drought danger. It was long recognized that lack of an adequate water supply threatened Birmingham's industrial expansion. Now plans for a vast industrial water system are approaching reality through the joint efforts of WPA and PWA. Ley Creek sewer in New York State had imperiled the health of 10,000 people for a quarter of a century because of an unsanitary disposal system. With WPA aid this menace is being fought by installation of a more modern system. In this field the national program created in a single year 3,350 miles of new trunk and lateral sewers, more than 107,000 service connections, and 1,155 sewage-disposal plants. Striving to combat malaria by extensive drainage, WPA has cleaned 492 miles of ditches in Virginia, affording protection to 150,000 people. In Hocking Valley, Ohio, a group of WPA workers was designated to combat a blazing fire in the heart of one of the richest coal fields in the world —a fire had been burning continuously at New Straitsville for fifty-two years. Rat-extermination projects have frequently been lampooned by WPA's critics, but in Chicago, where the Board of Health is sponsoring WPA effort along these lines, rats cause $7,000,000 damage to property every year.

The activities of the WPA are indeed varied—more varied than this brief survey can show. Its workers ply houseboats on the Yazoo River in Mississippi in order to bring books to inaccessible, remote communities, serve hot lunches to school children, probe traffic disasters in a campaign to make the highways safe in Kentucky, and build new flax-processing plants in Oregon. A panorama view of the WPA adventure cannot reveal its full human background nor properly establish the continuity of effort; it can only suggest the breadth of the program and the imagination behind it.

No partisan can pretend that all has been sweetness and light in the fulfilment of the projects. So sweeping an enterprise was doomed to suffer from bureaucracy and confusion. But the enemies of work relief do not protest primarily against flaws in execution. What they fear is the impact of a dynamic federal program which, without the stimulus of private profit, has nevertheless registered sober achievement. They cherish the notion that the unemployed are really unfit or unwilling to work. And above all, they recognize that work relief is both more costly and more ennobling than a niggardly dole. Through WPA the unemployed have redeemed the idea of work relief; the "boondogglers" have made good. Their future is up to Congress.

[*In the second section of this article, to be published next week, Mr. Wechsler will survey the record of WPA in the fine arts.*]

A Catholic Speaks Her Mind

BY MARY M——

NON-CATHOLICS in America who are not familiar with the ways of the Catholic church and have regarded with dismay the apparent unanimity with which the church is backing the fascist rebellion in Spain should be advised of several important points. They should understand that resort to war by secular authorities does not call for infallible ex cathedra pronouncements. The war in Spain is not a matter of faith or morals. It is a political and social conflict. True there are religious repercussions. But as Jacques Maritain, leading Catholic philosopher, put it: "The war does not thereby become holy; rather it runs the risk of causing that which is holy to be blasphemed" (*Nouvelle Revue Française,* July, 1937). The political views of the hierarchy, or even of the Pope, are not binding upon individual Catholics. Indeed, it is generally admitted that in the past popes have often been wrong, terribly wrong, in their political decisions. One need only recall Dante's struggles with Boniface VIII, or St. Catherine of Siena's vivid picture of the church—impoverished, bloodless, and anemic, because her priests, her supporters, her bishops were draining her blood, feeding upon her, and growing fat to her loss.

The political views of the authorities of the Catholic church are scarcely intelligible unless one remembers that they are men charged with the administration of vast wealth in the form of schools, hospitals, and churches, not to mention real estate and even stock investments. The Vatican was one of Wall Street's heaviest losers in 1929. The church has gone into business; to protect her wealth and her charitable institutions she is forced to compete with other capitalists, to go through the same financial maneuvers; and she experiences much the same sensations as they do in the face of a rising market or a lower rate of interest. It is not surprising, therefore, that the political outlook of the church should reflect to a certain extent her material interests. "For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also."

No one can deny that the Catholic press is conservative. It displays far more interest in the preservation of existing social values than in the rooting out of evil ones. As Dom Virgil Michel, Benedictine monk and economist

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of note, has pointed out, "the injustices suffered by share-croppers, the gross discriminations against Negroes . . . , economic oppressions of all sorts, crying court injustices, violent vigilante antics . . . go on, with hardly a prominent Catholic voice raised in protest. How the church fathers of old would have made the welkin ring with the righteous indignation of the Lord. . . . They knew of no compromise between Christ and the world" (*Orate Fratres,* December 27, 1936).

Sometimes one gets the impression that the church's activity in the social sphere is confined largely to labeling as Communist anyone who is making a really positive contribution to social progress. For example, John Brophy, director of the C. I. O., who is a Catholic and who has a son studying for the priesthood, has been pictured by certain Catholic papers, particularly *Our Sunday Visitor,* as a bewhiskered agent of Moscow. Father E. Harold Smith, writing in the *Commonweal* on January 1, 1937, warned us that in Europe "the church has lost the working class; in the United States, she has not lost them—as yet. There is very little of a concrete and practical nature to which we can point as the accomplishments of Catholics for social justice." Another writer, in the same Catholic weekly, complained as follows:

> Hardly a Catholic periodical appears nowadays without at least one vituperative denunciation of communism, and few denouncers seem to know precisely what they are denouncing. . . . I have become painfully aware . . . of our professional denunciators, who throw verbal bombshells against dastardly communism and from cloudy heights fling about quotations from the encyclicals—without ever getting down into the streets and actually doing something about them. The old misconception of the church as reactionary is not only not dissolving but adding the picture of her members as platitudinously windy and inert (February 26, 1937).

It would be hardly fair to mention, in this connection, Father Coughlin with his "ballots or bullets" talk, or Brooklyn's Father Curran, who is able to appear on the same program with "Three-Feet-of-Hose" Harvey and give him a good run for his money. They are extreme cases. But it is a fact that many Catholics pay tribute to the Hearst newspapers for their "signal service" on behalf of "truth and justice" in combating communism.

The picture of American Catholic authorities supporting General Franco's regime in Spain is not very pretty. For if the church in America has not altogether kept clear of the web spun for her by the capitalist system, the Spanish church has not yet resigned herself to the passing of feudalism. European Catholics, by reason of their proximity to the scene of conflict, are perhaps better equipped to recognize this situation—and they are not all blind to it. Thus the Austrian Catholic weekly, *Christliche Standestaat,* has this to say about Spain:

> The Popular Front government in Spain was a liberal, bourgeois government. . . . Juan March and the Royal Dutch Company financed the uprising. . . . This government was not well liked by the small minority of large landed proprietors because of the division of their land. . . . Nor was it liked by that part of the clergy which possessed large agrarian wealth. . . . One should not permit oneself to be deceived by the excesses of an unchained populace in the large cities . . . the Spanish employer is characterized in a manner unique in Europe by his lack of social sense. Today he still misses the good old days of the military dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, who once too often shot down workers out on strike (March 14, 1937).

And the Jesuit organ, *Dossiers de l'Action Populaire,* last February spoke out with equal frankness:

> With rare exceptions the Spanish clergy . . . had regrettably neglected social action on behalf of the working class; even further, through seeking, with a disconcerting . . . lack of conscience, relations . . . of friendship with those privileged by fortune, they had given rise to the accusation that they had become . . . the accomplice of capitalist abuses.

In view of these sober Catholic interpretations of the Spanish conflict, it seems incredible that His Eminence, Cardinal Goma, Archbishop of Toledo and Primate of Spain, could say, as he did in the London *Universe* of February 12, 1937:

> It is a war of love for religion against hate for religion. . . . Love of God . . . has put arms into the hands of half the Spaniards. Hate has armed the other half against God.

One finds it difficult to put much faith in the pastoral letter of a hierarchy led by the author of so false a statement about the rebels, so uncharitable, so unchristian a statement about the Popular Front government.

It would be nice to be able to say that the church in America is siding with the rebels out of naivete and an esprit de corps which knows only that churches were burned and priests killed. Unfortunately, this is untrue. Statements have appeared sporadically in the American Catholic press itself showing that the character of the revolt and the attitude of the Spanish church were clearly recognized. In August, 1936, an editorial in *Commonweal,* which has since become ardently anti-loyalist, declared:

> Spanish fascism will be the antithesis to the radical social demands made by the revolutionists. Superficially it will also oppose anti-clericalism. . . . But it will not liberate creative Catholic social energies . . . even if it wanted to it could not.

George N. Shuster, until recently managing editor of the *Commonweal,* in the issue of April 2 cited Father Ludwig Veit, conservative German historian, to show how the Spanish church had become dependent "upon a state hostile to even elementary demands of social justice," and characterized the Franco government as "a reactionary militarist regime which has sent Moors to smash the organizations of workingmen and peasants." Father Wilfrid Parsons, S. J., former editor of the Jesuit weekly, *America,* wrote in the September, 1936, issue of *Columbia*:

> The great tragedy of Spain was that in the nineteenth century the working classes apostasized from the church. . . . It was poverty, destitution, and injustice

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which made them apostasize. They got to hate the church because they hated the friends of the church, who exploited them and whom the church did nothing to rebuke or correct.

Father Smith, writing in the January 1 issue of *Commonweal,* went still farther:

For many years now the Catholic church has been the last refuge of . . . those keeping watch at the deathbed of dying social systems. To the poor and the workers in these countries the church has come to be regarded as a vested interest, her bishops landed grandees, and her work to minister to the spiritual needs of those who because they have the means to support her, have also the power to control her. For socially minded and progressive citizens in any country, therefore, to look to the church for aid or guidance in laying the foundations of a more just social order has been made to appear absurd.

Non-Catholics should not make the mistake of assuming that all Catholics have lined up with Franco at the snap of the ecclesiastical whip. Catholics in America do not have to go to Spain to know which side is theirs. Most of us found the Spanish pastoral letter very familiar. We have heard the same story so often from our own leaders. It was the same old bogy: Joe Stalin and his cohorts were about to take over the government and exterminate every trace of religion. Remember how they used it to kill the child-labor amendment—which even Herbert Hoover supported?

But while thousands of us are openly for the Loyalists, other thousands would like to be for the Loyalists but are afraid. They are not able to distinguish clearly between the political and the religious. They need to be told that they are not repudiating the Church of Christ when they repudiate politically the hierarchy.

What is so agonizing is that while the Catholic masses are casting about eagerly and praying desperately for the one thing they lack—vigorous, clear-spoken leadership—most of those who know the answers to their questions must perforce remain silent. This writer, for example, knows that to sign her name to this article would be to commit economic suicide. Even that would not be too bad if only something could be accomplished by it. Too often, however, we have seen Catholics rise in revolt only to fall back again completely discredited. Surely it is a shameful thing that upper-class Catholics have appointed themselves a committee to judge the catholicity of anyone whose truths they are unable to refute. This writer knows how they will reply to her. They will rack their brains to find some small slip, and they will harp on that. But above all they will "smear" her as being a poor Catholic, cowardly and disloyal.

These charges are not true. I love the Catholic church. That is why I have spoken up. For I believe that I can best render a service to Holy Mother Church by making it clear to all—Catholics and non-Catholics alike—that the Catholic church is the Church of Christ not because of the tyranny of a corrupt and autocratic hierarchy but in spite of it.

Hitler and Halifax

BY ROBERT DELL

Geneva, November 25

PRIME MINISTER CHAMBERLAIN has taken control of British foreign policy out of the hands of Sir Robert Vansittart, permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and is going too fast to please the Foreign Office. It was not the policy of the Foreign Office to tell Hitler that he could have a free hand in Europe east of the Rhine, or to bargain with him on that basis. The policy of Vansittart was to go on talking about a general European arrangement including Germany, without any hope of getting one but with the hope of putting off the evil day. For Vansittart does not desire to give Hitler such a free hand but regards it as ultimately a disagreeable necessity.

Neville Chamberlain sent Halifax to Berlin to prepare the way for a bargain by which Germany would be given the right of way at least in Austria and Czechoslovakia in return for an undertaking to abandon or at least postpone the demand for colonies. The Prime Minister and his envoy made a diplomatic blunder in thus blowing the gaff, as Vansittart and the Foreign Office recognize. The reality about British policy must now be evident except to those who refuse to see what is before their eyes. Unfortunately, there are many of these, especially in England. The following quotation from a private letter that I received from a friend in England a few days ago accurately describes the situation:

British public opinion is not really pro-fascist, but when this is said, it could not otherwise be worse than it is. The middle classes, while uncritical and ignorant of foreign affairs, are shell-shocked with the cowardice of true decadence. The word "war" makes them quake; yet they resolutely refuse to heed any evidence that war is likely to be forced upon them by the will of other states. They insistently believe, because they are determined to do so, that these states, especially Germany, can be bought off; and they disbelieve obstinately that it is possible for the rulers of any country to love violence, to practice gross injustice, or to harbor designs against British territory.

The choice of Halifax for the mission to Berlin was a humiliation for Eden, who has now almost ceased to

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count. Halifax has for some time past been for all practical purposes super-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Neville Chamberlain and Halifax both belong to the powerful group in English business and "society" who have fascist sympathies because they realize that fascism, as Professor Brady says in his valuable book on German fascism,* is no more than the politically conscious phase of what he calls "control capitalism"—as opposed to laissez faire capitalism—and is the only means by which the capitalist system, which has broken down, can be saved from final ruin. The Astor family belongs to this group; hence, the pro-German policy of the London *Times* and the London *Observer,* in both of which members of that family have a controlling interest.

The majority of the rank and file even of the Conservative Party would probably be opposed to Neville Chamberlain's policy if they understood it, and certain members of the Cabinet, including Eden, are opposed to it. But the opposition of the minority of the Cabinet can be successful only if they are ready to resign if they are overruled. It is difficult to hope that Eden will resign in any circumstances. Had he had a true conception of his own political interests, apart from any other consideration, he would have resigned his post as Minister for League of Nations Affairs in 1935 rather than agree to the betrayal of Abyssinia. As it is, he has gone on carrying out policies with which he did not agree and has allowed himself to be used as a decoy duck, for it is his presence in the Cabinet more than anything else that has blinded people in England and elsewhere to the true nature of British policy.

Before Halifax went to Berlin, Hitler's demands were known to the British government. Hitler declared that Germany would return to the League of Nations on the following conditions: revision of the Covenant; suppression of Article 16, providing for sanctions; abolition of all connection between the League and the peace treaties; suppression of Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles (the war-guilt clause); revision of the minorities treaties; recognition by Great Britain of Italian sovereignty over Ethiopia. Hitler demanded that Great Britain should agree to the "reorganization" of Czechoslovakia on the lines of the Swiss federal system and should undertake to give no diplomatic, political, or military aid to the Austrian government. Hitler agreed not to raise the colonial question for six years if Great Britain would undertake to help Germany recover its colonies at the end of that time, and not to make naval or military bases in the former German colonies. He further promised to do his best to restore peace in Spain, on condition that the British government recognized Franco, and also to do his best to restore peace in the Far East.

By sending Halifax to Germany, therefore, Neville Chamberlain accepted Hitler's program as a basis of discussion. This does not necessarily mean that he was ready to agree to every point in it. No doubt Hitler in the last resort would be prepared to accept less than he asked, and it was clearly Neville Chamberlain's intention to try to arrive at a compromise on the basis of Hitler's proposals. It will be seen that Hitler offered nothing at all in return for the concessions that he demanded, and Chamberlain will no doubt try to obtain a *quid pro quo* for sacrificing Czechoslovakia and Austria and agreeing to destroy the League of Nations. For the conditions demanded by Hitler would mean the destruction of the League, which would be deprived of any power of preventing or punishing aggression, and some of its members would never agree to such conditions. Incidentally, Germany could not be given a permanent seat on the Council except by a unanimous decision of that body, which would never be obtained.

In the House of Commons Chamberlain refused to give any information about Halifax's conversations, following the latter's return, but said that his visit had encouraged the desire of the two countries for closer cooperation. It is therefore clear that he wishes to continue negotiations. He also said that no pledges had been given and no commitments had been made, and that the government would make no commitments without first consulting Parliament. Edward Grey more than once made similar statements to the House of Commons in the years before the war. Yet he made grave commitments without the knowledge of the House of Commons, of the English people, or even of some of his own colleagues in the Cabinet, and on August 4, 1914, the Manchester *Guardian* said in a leading article: "Sir Edward Grey's speech last night . . . showed that for years he has been keeping back the whole truth."

The question now is whether and for how long Neville Chamberlain and his fascist friends will be able to go on humbugging the British public. They will be able to as long as the majority of the English people refuse to believe that anything disagreeable can possibly be true. Never was the refusal to recognize the real nature of Nazi Germany more evident than in speeches made by members of the Labor and Liberal parties in the House of Lords on November 17 and 18 and in the speech made by Sir Archibald Sinclair, leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Commons, at a public meeting in Manchester. Sir Archibald Sinclair said in the course of his speech:

> We want to welcome Germany back into the League as an equal in the fullest sense. . . . Once Germany rejoins the League and agrees to a measure of general disarmament and the international supervision of armaments and undertakes to abide by conciliation or arbitration in all international disputes, there is no price for her friendship that our League obligations permit, that justice and equity demand, and that third-party judgment assesses that we should be unwilling to pay. Such are the aims of Liberal policy. It is based not on fear—fear of foreign competition, fear of Mussolini, fear of socialism—but on faith.

Sinclair's definition of faith seems to resemble that given by the legendary candidate for holy orders in his examination paper: "Faith is a grace given us by God which enables us to believe what we know to be untrue."

Lord Sankey, who was Lord Chancellor in the last Labor Cabinet, is likewise willing to accept Hitler's con-

* "The Spirit and Structure of German Fascism." By Robert A. Brady. Viking Press.

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ditions for the return of Germany to the League. In a speech in the House of Lords on November 18 he said that the most important thing for the League of Nations to consider was whether it was to have the United States and Germany in the League or whether it should retain the article on sanctions (Article 16) in the Covenant. He thought that it would be better to have the United States and Germany in the League and Article 16 out of the Covenant. The illusion that the United States would at once join the League if Article 16 were taken out of the Covenant is entertained by many people in England, but Lord Sankey ought to know better.

Perhaps the most brilliant suggestion was that made by Lord Samuel, a prominent Liberal, in the House of Lords on November 17. As part of an all-round settlement, Lord Samuel proposed, Russia should give a pledge not to interfere in the affairs of other nations. "If that were done," he said, "Germany could be expected to stop breathing fire and slaughter against her." If Lord Samuel were an imbecile, one could believe this suggestion to be sincere. If there is a country that should be asked to give a pledge not to interfere in the affairs of other nations, it is Germany. At the very moment that Lord Samuel was speaking the British government knew that Hitler demanded the right to interfere in the affairs of Czechoslovakia and Austria. He has interfered in them already without asking anybody.

And now it has been revealed to the world that Hitler and Mussolini have been repeating in France the tactics that they pursued in Spain and aiding a plot for the overthrow of the French Republic. Fortunately, the plot was discovered in time, but will the present French government have the courage to bring the responsibility home and probe the matter to its depths? For my part I doubt it, for it was the weakness of the French government and its policy in regard to Spain that encouraged the plotters to embark on their adventure. About a fortnight ago certain members of a reactionary organization in a French town at no very great distance from Geneva said that as there was certainly going to be a Communist revolution, the "Nationals" were determined to forestall the Communists. When it was suggested that their opponents might prove to be stronger than they were, they replied that they counted on German intervention "to restore order" and were convinced that the British government would adopt a policy of non-intervention. The French government knows that the Roselli brothers were murdered by Italian police officers who had been allowed to enter France on the pretext of watching over the safety of an Italian royal personage on a visit. The French government knows that the riot at Clichy, a working-class suburb of Paris, was started by German agents. The French government knows that the explosion in the rue de Presbourg, Paris, was traced to the Italian embassy in Paris. In each case investigation has been stifled and the criminals have gone scot-free.

The decision to send Halifax to Germany was made, as Eden admitted in the House of Commons, without any consultation with the French government. The situation is grave, for Hitler is dictating terms as if Germany were a victor imposing its will on the vanquished. There is only one way in which the countries threatened by Hitler are to be defended. That is by a general European pact of mutual assistance—the Geneva protocol of 1924, with whatever amendments may be necessary, restricted to Europe. The present British government will never agree to join in such a pact, but the pact might still be possible if the British government undertook to fulfil its obligations under Article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, should the occasion arise. Even that is too much to expect from Neville Chamberlain, and it is much to be feared that Chautemps and Delbos will once more yield and consent to continue negotiations with Hitler. In that case one can but hope that the French Socialists and Communists will at last have the courage to turn Chautemps out of office.

Hague—Worried Dictator

BY McALISTER COLEMAN

A MIGHTY nervous man these days is the usually dapper and unperturbed Mayor of Jersey City, Frank Hague. He hurries from one conference of his lawyers and advisers to another, on both sides of the Hudson. Supposedly immune to newspaper attacks, he berates the New York correspondents for their stories about the doings in his domain. At the same time his large pack of trained seals on the Jersey City papers are urged on in their efforts to make it appear that between the innocent Jersey citizenry and the invading hordes from Moscow, via the C. I. O., stands the fair, white, sixty-one-year-old body of Mayor Hague.

All this exceptional excitement comes from the Mayor's declaration of war upon the Committee for Industrial Organization. It will be recalled that the Democratic Hague's Republican ally, Harold Hoffman—soon, praise God, to be the ex-Governor of New Jersey—was the first to announce that the C. I. O. was not wanted in his state. That was nearly a year ago, and ever since C. I. O. organizers have been signing them up right and left. Distressed at the ineptness of his pudgy political partner, Hague decided to show his clients among the labor-baiting corporations and the runaway shops that infest New Jersey how a he-man delivers the goods. Announcing at a dinner attended by applauding admirers, "I am the law," the Mayor repeated his instructions to his police

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department to keep all "undesirables" out of Jersey City.

It was hardly necessary to stress this warning. By now the police of Jersey City know well enough what is meant by "undesirables." An undesirable is a union organizer, either A. F. of L. or C. I. O., who comes to Jersey City in an attempt to raise the wretched wages and improve the working conditions of that open-shop Utopia. This definition was strenuously applied to A. F. of L. organizers as far back as Hague's successful attack on the proposed New Jersey anti-injunction bill. At that time the *Voice of Labor,* official publication of the state Federation of Labor, asked, "Shall New Jersey be the dumping ground of cheap coolie labor, the last refuge of toryism and reaction in America?" This blast the A. F. of L. organization quickly followed up with a red-hot attack on Hague and his chancellor, Luther A. Campbell, who had put off the ermine long enough to write a piece for the papers damning the bill. Today the high officials of the state federation—but not the rank and file—are standing back of Hague in his roughing of the C. I. O. organizers. Bill Green is picky about whose ox is gored.

Hague's declaration of war was promptly taken up by the Jersey C. I. O. Through the dawn-gray streets of Hague's miniature Reich on November 29 moved a group of stalwarts carrying leaflets announcing a meeting of the C. I. O. in Jersey City. They were members of unions affiliated with the C. I. O., the Workers' Defense League, and the American Civil Liberties Union. Instantly they were surrounded by siren-screeching police cars and their hysterical occupants. A policeman came up to little Sidney Hertzberg of the Workers' Defense League shouting, "Why don't you behave like a gentleman?" and thereupon struck Hertzberg in the face. Another grabbed David Clendenin, of the same organization, by the seat of his pants and flung him down a flight of stairs in the headquarters of a local union. Clendenin picked himself up and remarked, "I know that you wish to dissemble your love, but why do you kick me downstairs?" In all, five C. I. O. organizers were thrown into the local bastile and thirteen were thrown into the Holland Tunnel.

"It was a famous victory" for Mayor Hague, but a Pyrrhic one. It aligned against him forces beyond his Grove Street horizons—the resources and fighting machinery of the C. I. O., for example.

New Jersey labor is fortunate in its C. I. O. organizers. One is the quiet-spoken, hard-hitting Carl Holderman, dynamic energizer of the Textile Workers' Organizing Committee and the founding father of Labor's Non-Partisan League of New Jersey. Holderman's background is strikingly like that of Debs. His father was an Alsatian. At the tender age of thirteen Carl went into the railroad shops at Hornell, New York, his birthplace. After working as a fireman for two years, he got into textiles, soon becoming an executive in the United Textile Workers' Union. Whatever Mayor Hague may think, Holderman belongs to no political party.

The C. I. O.'s chief of staff for New Jersey is William Jennings Carney, a stocky, perky little proletarian who has learned his way around from long experience in organizing men and women into unions. One of the rank-and-file leaders in the now famous Goodyear strike at Akron, Ohio, Carney has kept the faith bequeathed him by his father, a militant member of the United Mine Workers of America.

When Holderman and Carney received Hague's ultimatum, they stripped for action. Presiding at a convention of the Non-Partisan League at Newark, Holderman asked for the formation of an American Labor Party in New Jersey. His demand was enthusiastically indorsed by 369 delegates from 137 locals, representing New Jersey workers from shipbuilders to needle tradesmen. An executive committee numbering some sixty members, with many representatives of the A. F. of L. as well as of the C. I. O., is now drawing up plans for the intensive organization of a Jersey A. L. P. Within the next six months another conference will be called to draw up a platform and general program.

Hague looks across the river, where Tammany, on whose pattern he has built his Hudson County machine, has gone down beneath pluralities obtained for the fusion movement by the oncoming American Labor Party of New York. He looks morosely at the returns of the last Jersey election, in which his man Moore was elected governor by the distressingly slim margin of 45,000. And he wonders if he is slipping. These pestiferous C. I. O. people are a much tougher crowd than the A. F. of L. They are imaginative and waspish. On Hague's desk is a mimeographed sheet addressed to His Honor from Bill Carney's office. It is entitled "An Elementary Correspondence Course in Americanization for Mayor Frank Hague of Jersey City." It contains definitions of democracy with special reference to Jersey City and prescribes the reading of the Bill of Rights as home work. The New York papers carry a statement by Morris Ernst, of counsel for the C. I. O. and an ardent defender of the New Deal, to the effect that the C. I. O. contemplates buying property in Jersey City on which speakers will promulgate the forbidden union doctrine. Suits against Hague's cops are pending.

Hague's answer to attacks in the past has been the usual one of the badgered boss—contemptuous silence. Now, however, he is talking, and the more he talks the more he exposes to the country at large the peculiar workings of the dictator mind. In answering a letter of protest against his usurpation of civil liberties signed by twenty-six progressive Congressmen, Hague blustered: "I can assure you that everything is under control. There is nothing for you to be disturbed about that I can see." And when a New York legislative committee asked him who decided whether or not a group could organize in Jersey City, he pounded himself on the chest and shouted, "I decide. Me. Here." These outbursts are a source of pained astonishment to his public-relations counselors and of joy to his opponents. Out of his own mouth he is confirming every charge leveled against him and alienating the most conservative papers of New Jersey.

All in all, being a dictator even in Jersey City is a hell of a headache.

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

THE resignation of Ambassador Dodd had long been expected. The press statements that it was due to his having become *persona non grata* to the Nazi government tell only part of the story. From my point of view no ambassador in Berlin ought to be *persona grata* to the Nazis, save in the correctness of his diplomatic conduct. He ought always to let it be clear that we can feel no real friendship for a dictatorship which is actively trying to undermine our institutions. If, as some dispatches hint, Hugh R. Wilson's appointment to succeed Mr. Dodd is "a pacification move," it will be a misfortune. The American republic cannot and must not strike hands with the dictator. At all times it should let it be known here and abroad that its sympathies are with the democratic states in their opposition to totalitarianism.

Mr. Wilson's appointment will commend itself to the diplomatic service because he is a "career man" and a very able one. He has been in the department since 1911, serving in Portugal, Guatemala, Buenos Aires, Germany, Austria, and Japan. He has also been Minister to Switzerland and is now Assistant Secretary of State. Certainly if a long and varied training means anything—and knowledge of the language of the country to which he is assigned—Mr. Wilson is completely qualified for his new post, which is the most important job in the entire diplomatic service today, with the possible exception of the ambassadorship to Japan. That another outstanding European post is to be filled by a professional diplomat will cause rejoicing throughout the service. No one who is not in touch with it can realize the intense discouragement of its members when they read of the appointment of a Joseph Davies to Russia.

What outrages all the career diplomats is the flagrant sale of high positions to outsiders because of their large contributions to party funds—"sale" and not "award" is the proper word. The career men ask why they should be expected to equip themselves for a life of diplomacy if they are to see the prize posts given to multimillionaires or politicians. There are many very competent men in the lower grades who have come in, after most rigid tests, since the permanent service was established. If the avenues to promotion are constantly blocked by the choice of men like Claude Bowers, who has sat so comfortably in Hendaye since the war in Spain began, or John N. Willys, the automobile millionaire, who misrepresented us in Poland, the service cannot be expected to attract men of ambition and high quality. I do not mean to imply that all the highest positions should be filled by career diplomats. As the English service has shown, a permanent diplomatic service runs the danger of becoming formalized, ultra-conservative, and out of touch with popular thought at home. Red tape and bureaucratism are always the enemies of efficiency in a government service. It would be well to keep perhaps 15 per cent of the highest jobs for men of special equipment, just as England, in violation of all precedents, sent James Bryce as ambassador to Washington because he was the best Englishman available for the place.

Today the State Department is the stepchild of Congress. The most important of all the departments, it is always being starved. Thus for the fiscal year 1935 it received only $15,860,779, and for the fiscal year 1936 only $16,816,356. For the current year it gets around $18,000,000. This is just about *two-sevenths* of the cost of one of the two new battleships authorized by Congress. The Army and Navy departments between them are to receive $1,300,000,000 in the current fiscal year—and the first line of defense gets $18,000,000! Was there ever anything more preposterous? A minister in the diplomatic service gets only $10,000 a year, with a slight expense account. Writing in the *Ladies' Home Journal* last August, Dorothy Thompson said: "Mr. Hugh Wilson, our minister to Berne, is an exceptionally able diplomat, regarded as such by his colleagues. They [the career diplomats] have brought the United States inestimable values, but they are rewarded by relief wages, literally. They get barely what it costs them to live and no more." She too dwelt upon the fact that "we spend more in one week for the United States navy than we spend in a whole year for our entire diplomatic and consular service, plus the State Department at home. We spend more, officially, in one week to prepare for eventual war than we spend in one year on our entire representation charged to promote the peace!"

I personally know able younger men in the service who would get out tomorrow if they could. They hold the rank of first secretary of legation or embassy, but they see nothing ahead. Having no private means they do not wish to be appointed ministers unless they can go to a small South American republic, for they know that they cannot live on their salaries and do the necessary entertaining and provide for the education at home of their children. I hope that in the next year or two this condition will be changed, and I cannot understand why the President has not insisted upon the doubling of the State Department's appropriation. Now that George S. Messersmith, lately our able minister in Vienna, has been appointed Assistant Secretary of State with the duty of dealing with Congress, I am hopeful that he will be able to convince that body of the gross injustice done to the country by its incredible niggardliness.

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

A NOTE ON A. E. HOUSMAN

BY LOUIS KRONENBERGER

SINCE Housman's death much has been written in the form of memoirs concerning a personality that had earlier seemed closed and inaccessible.* All of us knew Housman's poetry; some of us knew a little about his scholarship—had dipped, it may be, into the prefaces to the "Manilius" and both relished and recoiled from their just but unmerciful and even needless excoriations. None of us knew more about the man than might be contained in a page of "Who's Who" eked out by half a dozen possibly apocryphal anecdotes. The man remained remote; and after reading what has been written about him since he died, one concludes that he was remote from almost everybody who knew him. He was not inhuman: he had an epicene sense of fun, a delight in good drink, a need though not a capacity for friendship, a delicate family sense; he had grieved over the death of his mother, and he must have known some more private grief which, we are half promised, will some day be explained. But he not only withdrew from what we loosely call the world; he withdrew hardly less from that smaller world of dons and scholars in which he made his home. I have neither the data nor the intuitions to trace out here the psychological reasons which caused him to live so inwardly: I want to speak only of the poet, and of those aspects of the man which the poet somehow revealed.

Housman's death, though it meant something sentimentally to those who had been brought up on his poems, meant almost nothing to the life stream of poetry itself. For what he wrote bore no acute relation to our own times; and though he had imitators, what they imitated was not new and was not susceptible of becoming new in their hands. "A Shropshire Lad" has a slight period air about it and seems, if it belongs anywhere, to belong to the 1890's; but that is quite a different matter from the strict relationship of creative activity to a particular age, and of that strict relationship Housman's poetry never partook at all. At its first appearance it was already a minor classic, not simply because it was faultless in its kind, but also because it adhered to a few unchanging moods, a few emotional rather than intellectual truths.

As a result, and in keeping with the nature of such poetry, we have ourselves responded to Housman wholly by way of the emotions. Much has been written about his verse, but very little that was more than a way of expressing pleasure in it—very little, that is to say, which was really critical in method. A knowledge of his limitations perhaps tempered but never extinguished the emotional enthusiasm of those who wrote; and after all, how much was there to say? One could hardly tie him in with anything very original concerning life itself, or explain at great length a philosophy that was almost self-explanatory, or find special meanings in him that the rest of the world had neglected to find. When one has said that Housman was plainly a perfect poet, and just as plainly not a great one, one has gone far toward characterizing him. As time passes, it is not so much with men like Heine and Hardy, whose feeling he shares, that he will be grouped, as with men like Campion and Marvell, whose charm of artistry he recaptures.

A few things, however, remain to be said. Not much concerning his art, since all that has been said before. Still, to maintain perspective, one must say again of his art how delicate and evocative it is, how scrupulous and sometimes magical in its use of diction, rhythm, and cadence; how austere when there is reason for austerity. But, to pass on, something might be said about Housman's aloofness and something about his reaction to life—as they are revealed in the poetry itself—since to assess them is to come closest to assessing his scale of values, to discovering what his stature is as opposed to his style.

His aloofness was, of course, a condition of temperament and persisted long enough to harden into a condition of mind. He lived what passes for an austere life because he enjoyed a few fine and simple pleasures intensely, and the others not at all. He had a severe, or at any rate a fastidious, taste, which means that he would have protested against most of life because it seemed contaminating before he would have protested against most of life because it seemed unsound. His rejection of first-hand living must finally be set down to too much aesthetic sensibility, to a kind of squeamishness. It kept him, as a poet, whole, but it also kept him undernourished; his purity survived at the expense of his humanity. The familiar moods deepened as he grew older, the 'cello note which is fugitive in his first book is much better sustained in his later ones; but we are simply made conscious of an older man and a maturer artist, not of a profounder thinker or a more experienced human being.

This aloofness, this sealed personality, of Housman's has cost him some of our adult allegiance: one's delight in his poetry is apt to be in some sense a hangover, a sentimental prolongation from one's youth. Those to whom he means the most are people, I should guess, of facile emotions and too little toughness of mind: even people whose feeling for literature, though sensitive, borders on the superficial. For the rest of us he has been much more of a pleasure than a need. As a poet he has

*"Alfred Edward Housman." Recollections by Various Hands. Henry Holt and Company. $2.50.

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remained magnetic, but as a philosopher he has been increasingly less persuasive.

T. S. Eliot has discussed the question of how far we can acquiesce, for the sake of the poetry, in a poet's ideas which on other grounds we should disavow. The point is apposite with Housman, whose sentimental fatalism does not always ring true to begin with, and is furthermore too indulgently and even gratuitously applied. When we are young, the overwritten pathos in Housman seems the most tragic thing in the world; but as we gain experience of life, it seems—so self-inflicted, so almost graceful it has become—scarcely tragic at all. (What seems tragic is the suppressed emotion in the poet, but that is another and purely inferential matter.) When I read Housman today, particularly "A Shropshire Lad," I find so many lads lying in so many graves and so much mortal beauty doomed, page after page, to fade, that sometimes it is more than just unconvincing; it is a little distasteful. Then Housman seems dangerously thin, which is very different from seeming minor. It is only the graver mood of some of the later poems, where a note is struck at once ironic and moving, that restores my faith in the poetic soundness of his philosophy.

Poems such as these best ones show the mark of true poetry, which must always be an equipoise of sound and sense, and which is another and better thing than true lyricism. At such times Housman transforms a way of thinking about life into a way of experiencing it, so that in the grip of a strong emotion—to revert to the point raised by Eliot—you simply ask no questions. These best poems have the perhaps accidental virtue of being impossible to parody or imitate, whereas the lightfoot lads, the young men hanged by moonlight, the crowns and pounds and guineas, are easy to parody—not just because of their lilt or their simplicity but because they constitute a manner of poetry rather than poetry itself. Whenever Housman rises from the sentimental to the elegiac, from the rueful to the stoic, his philosophy and his feelings both regain their dignity, and are helped on their way by a very great tradition; he has ceased to write, however skilfully, the kind of verses schoolgirls sigh over.

> The troubles of our proud and angry dust
> Are from eternity, and shall not fail.
> Bear them we can, and if we can we must.
> Shoulder the sky, my lad, and drink your ale.

There you have Housman's whole outlook upon existence—the pessimism, the stoicism, the cynicism all compact; what to expect from life, what response to make, and in what manner to make it. At least the first two lines of this are fine poetry; but a note creeps in in the last two I could wish left out, a faintly British note of playing the game and not giving in on the job, an equally British note of asking no questions about it all, of going in for that mindless and stolid acceptance of things which diminishes suffering by ignoring it. No doubt this is a Spartan or Roman attitude; it also smacks a little of Sir Henry Newbolt;* and it does not save Housman, for all his fine sensibility, from a kind of soullessness. It is not like Hardy's pessimism, but rather like Browning's optimism turned inside out.

But a more formidable objection lies in the general meagerness of the philosophy itself. It speaks, not of the suffering of someone who has striven as a person and fought desperately and failed, but of defeatism tied neatly with lyrical knots and bows. From the immense height of Housman's aloofness it would be almost comforting to see everything foredoomed. That is the unintentional, as opposed to the conscious, sentimentalism in Housman's work, and the result is that after much iteration we take it intellectually with a grain of salt. It has become as much a habit with him as a conviction.

His stature, then, is not great. By virtue of a certain poetic accent he comes close at times to the mood of great poetry; but he never plunges us into a world more spacious than our own, never breaks the graceful lamp that guards the naked flame. His real place is perhaps less with the poets I mentioned earlier than with the epigrammatists of the Greek anthology. Like them, he is intense but remote, pathetic but impersonal. The revelations of greater poets who stand rooted in a sense of reality which Housman feared and so came to disdain, the insight and audacity of those who were men before they were poets—of these things Housman gives us nothing, because he had nothing to give. His is a special charm, very potent of its kind; but it must be seen in its proper perspective.

*It is interesting to note (and I have noted it only *after* writing these words) that during the war Housman was a vigorous patriot, and gave every cent of his savings to the government.

BOOKS

William Once the Second

THE KAISER ON TRIAL. By George Sylvester Viereck. Preface by James W. Gerard. The Greystone Press: New York. $3.50.

GEORGE SYLVESTER VIERECK is no newcomer in America's world of letters—he wields a prolific pen, and the long list of his published works covers practically every form of writing, from the political and historical essay to poetry, drama, and fiction. And knowing Mr. Viereck's past, one does not expect him to be objective or impartial. He has always been frankly pro-German. He claims relationship with the house of Hohenzollern. He has been for almost two decades the acknowledged contact man between the ex-Kaiser in Doorn and the outside world. He pays annual visits to William Once the II in his Dutch St. Helena; is, in fact, the only journalist having access to that once mighty ruler. If he remembers the author's antecedents, the intelligent and discriminating reader will get from Mr. Viereck's latest work an interesting review of an important and exceedingly complex segment of our modern times.

To the younger generation the idea that one could force an aggressor to face an international tribunal may be slightly comic. Not so in 1918. Paragraph 227 of the Treaty of Versailles demanded that the Emperor of Germany be brought to justice as the guilty aggressor. Lloyd George fought and won a British election in 1918 with the slogan "Hang the Kaiser!" Wilhelm was never tried, for Holland

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refused to surrender the royal refugee. What Mr. Viereck gives us is an imaginary trial, with the ex-Emperor in the docket and outstanding statesmen, generals, and members of imperial and royal houses, dead and alive, on the witness stand. In the end he absolves the jury of twelve men and women from the responsibility of a verdict and leaves it to the reader—and posterity—to decide.

To the uninitiated it may be news that those who opposed the war vigorously while it was in progress were much less inclined to hold Germany's titular head responsible for its outbreak than were the liberals and pacifists who supported the war and the statesmen who dictated the terms of the Versailles treaty. In the judgment of the Socialists and radicals the World War was the direct result of economic rivalry between Great Britain and Germany, with the Kaiser a contributory but not the moving force. Wilhelm's ambitious dream of German naval supremacy produced a premature crisis, and his support of Austria's extortionist practices against the Serbian government forced France and czarist Russia to become participants in a war neither was ready to fight. That the Emperor could have prevented the war and is therefore not entirely guiltless even Mr. Viereck is forced to admit.

Wilhelm received the news of Austria's ultimatum while on a Northland cruise. Mr. Viereck represents him as tortured by doubts. "No nation can accept such conditions." Nevertheless he made no move to check the Austrians. He waited and became an accessory after the fact. He had another chance when the Serbians accepted Austria's arrogant demands with a few minor reservations. "The Kaiser," says Mr. Viereck, "draws a breath of relief. In large characters he scrawls in the margin of the dispatch: 'A brilliant achievement in the brief space of forty-eight hours. This eliminates every reason for war.' 'Plessen,' the Kaiser calls to his aide, 'send a telegram to von Moltke. Tell him that Austria now lacks any pretext for war. Serbia has complied with all the demands of Vienna.' "

Had the telegram been sent to Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg, war might have been averted. But it went to the chief of the general staff, who was powerless to act. When Wilhelm arrived in Potsdam on the following day he learned that Austria had broken off relations with Serbia. He tried to localize the fight by a personal appeal to the Czar, but it was too late.

One of the most interesting chapters in the book presents Wilhelm's conflict with Otto von Bismarck, who aspired to be to his young Kaiser what Mussolini became to King Victor Emanuel thirty years later. Viereck gives a graphic portrayal of the events that led to Bismarck's dismissal, though William II seems to me distinctly miscast in the role of people's tribune.

One can forgive the author for taking Wilhelm of Doorn at his own valuation; after all, that is the purpose of his chronicle. But on what evidence does he base the not too fastidious story of what happened in that sealed coach which, sanctioned by General Ludendorff, sped Lenin and his "twenty-nine intellectual vagabonds" toward the Russian border? What bearing has the tale on the Kaiser's guilt? Is it possible that Mr. Viereck included this nasty story about "Ludendorff's protege" and the "Austrian deserter Radek" (Radek is a Russian Pole) as a gratuitous slap at the hated Communists? "Germany," writes Mr. Viereck, "violated her own spirit and tradition when she dispatched Lenin to Russia; it was the sin against the Holy Ghost. She sinned again when she trafficked with a government she considered the enemy of mankind. It is at this instance, not at the beginning of the war, that she became 'guilty,' even though—like the hero of a Greek tragedy—she sinned unwillingly and unwittingly, driven by forces beyond her control."

Mr. Viereck has undoubtedly accomplished what he set out to do: leave the world at large with a friendlier picture of Germany's World War emperor—Wilhelm the uncomplaining martyr, Wilhelm who could write his own story for a world press hungry for sensations but forgoes this privilege lest he add to the dissensions of a world staggering on the brink of another holocaust, Wilhelm the misunderstood. What an appealing portrait! But why stop there, Mr. Viereck? Why not say also that millions of Germans today would welcome Wilhelm II with ringing of churchbells and dancing in the streets because, with all his sins and failings, he was so immeasurably better than the present ruler of the unhappy Reich.

LUDWIG LORE

The Civil War

THE CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION. By J. G. Randall. D. C. Heath and Company. $5.

THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR: AN INTERPRETATION. By Carl Russell Fish. Edited by William Ernest Smith. Longmans, Green and Company. $3.50.

IN MANY ways J. G. Randall's big book is the outstanding historical work of the year; and this reviewer, for one, will not be surprised if it receives the Pulitzer Prize. "The Civil War and Reconstruction" contains all the customary evidences of careful scholarship. A lifelong student of the period as well as the director of a seminary at the University of Illinois which has turned up much useful information of a specialized kind, Professor Randall has written a work which will be admired—and justly, too—for its utilization of many hitherto unused manuscript collections and learned monographs and articles. Also, there will be many who will hail it as an outstanding example of what has come to be recognized as recent American historiography's contribution to historical method, the so-called scientific or objective type of analysis. Indeed, Professor Randall himself has stated his claims to objectivity in the following words in his preface: ". . . a cautious historian may well choose to record the event, not indeed without interpretation, but without committing himself to a particular formula of determinism, or, indeed, to any hypothesis."

There is such a disarming note of candor about many sections of this book that the author is likely to be accepted at his word in many quarters. Nevertheless, it must be said at once, and this despite the author's protestations, that this is one of the most obviously prejudiced historical works of recent years. Not only is Professor Randall's whole frame of reference false, but both by a conscious selection of materials —or, rather, omission of relevant facts—and by a scarcely concealed hostility toward the most important actors of the piece he has ended by presenting a thoroughly distorted view of the purpose, nature, and outcome of a historical event which is to be ranked with the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution among the greatest in modern times.

Why has the author bent and twisted this period beyond all recognition? Why has he failed to catch its great historical import?

The explanations are to be found in his underlying assumptions. According to Professor Randall, during the 1850's in particular the two sections of the South and the North—not

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two classes struggling for the control of the national state—were beginning to stand for separate nations in the cultural sense. The South, the seat of the plantation system, was filled with estates where living was based on an orderly acceptance of obligations and rights. (In a general way, the author's analysis is much like the idyllic description of the feudal manor. Hence, Professor Randall naturally underestimates the number and influence of the Negro slave revolts, just as apologists for feudalism soft-pedal the serf and peasant risings of the late Middle Ages.) So, at one point, Professor Randall says: "Much of the ideal of the Old South could be expressed in terms of an ordered society with well-defined classes, each living a self-sufficiency existence, free from excessive preoccupation with competitive struggle. It was a society . . . where slaves should not hate their bonds." And he quotes an authority who claims that this ideal was being realized substantially. While at another point Professor Randall characterizes the slave system as a "species of agricultural and patriarchal feudalism." On the other hand, the North was beginning to gravitate toward industrial production; hence the operations of the profit motive were much more sharply in evidence. The two nations might have continued living side by side in amity had not hot-heads in both camps pointed up artificial differences and neglected to stress the enduring bonds of union. The activities of these irreconcilables the author constantly brands as "irrational." So, he says: "On both sides there was irrational inference: misrepresentations that beclouded the air seemed more potent than essential realities which the people were not permitted to understand."

The political struggle over the organization of the territories played into the hands of the irreconcilables. The tragedy of the Civil War is to be found in the fact that had these impatient ones only been prepared to wait, time itself would have blotted out all differences, for slavery could not have endured for very much longer. It was incapable of moving into the territories; it was productively (no evidence is presented) an inefficient system; and the blacks in due time and as a result of the understanding care of their masters would have been converted into free men with useful social functions.

But because the irreconcilables were in control of the South, secession was forced. While in the North Lincoln's wise and temperate program of gradual emancipation, compensation of the slave lords, and the immediate readmission of the seceded states was wrested from his hands and twisted into the "vindictive," "vengeful," "hateful," "denunciatory," "coarser" program of the radical Republicans. One typical passage will suffice to indicate the author's emotional prejudices toward that party whose bold measures assured the success of the Civil War: "In emancipation as in other quarters radicalism was to find its war-born opportunity. Beneficent measures, albeit with an excess of righteous unction, might result from this opportunity. Once loosed, however, the forces of radicalism were likely to display other tendencies. Vindictive in effect and partisan in motive . . ."

One single fact, however, scatters this neat little theory of the impermanence of the slavery controversy to the four winds; and that is to be found in the continuance of the plantation system right into our own day. As an economic mode of production, the very heart of the plantation system is to be found in the necessity for preserving the labor supply in an unfree status: and it matters very little whether the laborers are indentured servants, slaves, or share-croppers. Only contemporaneously is the plantation system slowly in process of dissolution; for unfree laborers, who had to be kept unfree because of a labor-scarcity market, can now be replaced by free wage-laborers because a great labor reserve has sprung into existence. In other words, it took not a few years for the plantation economy to break up but almost a full century.

Hence, despite the fateful economic, class, and political consequences of the Civil War, the whole period has no meaning for Professor Randall. Men were irrational; so was their conduct; so were the results of their labors. The Civil War gave us but one heritage—a burden of hate. That it achieved one of the greatest triumphs of modern times—the release of American industrial capitalism from its bondage—Professor Randall cannot see; and in thus failing he has only shrouded in confusion the significance of the greatest epoch in American history.

The late Carl Russell Fish's "The American Civil War" is only a fragment pieced together from notes by a devoted former student. Professor Fish's language, when he speaks of the radical Republicans, is more temperate than Professor Randall's, but he has added little to a proper understanding of the character of the struggle, despite the fact that his editor calls this incomplete essay an "interpretation."

LOUIS M. HACKER

Consumer's Progress

THE SHOPPING GUIDE. Edited by E. B. Weiss in Collaboration with Maurice Mermey. Whittlesey House. $2.50.

HOW TO BEAT THE HIGH COST OF LIVING. By Ray Giles. Simon and Schuster. $1.

40,000,000 GUINEA PIG CHILDREN, By Rachel Lynn Palmer and Isadore M. Alpher, M.D. Vanguard Press. $2.

POISONS, POTIONS, AND PROFITS. By Peter Morell. Knight Publications. $2.

THE progress of a movement can be gauged with a nice degree of accuracy by the literature it inspires. Muckraking is characteristic of the first stage; people must be aroused to the dangers. Next come unsensational guidebooks charting the methods of reform.

According to this standard, the consumer movement has now moved forward. Of the new crop of consumer literature, three out of four books are in the "how to do it" classification. But proof that the movement has really made progress is more concrete. Business has now turned from derision to boring from within. As evidence we submit "The Shopping Guide," which purports to enlighten the buying public on tricks of the trade. The eighteen authors who collaborated on this encyclopedia should know whereof they write, for all of them are at present employed as department buyers in retail stores.

A magician may demonstrate how he pulls the rabbit out of the hat, but he is coy about publicizing his more subtle tricks. A department buyer, who after all must be something of a magician to arrange so many special sales where one dollar will buy merchandise worth two, is similarly inhibited from divulging the tricks of his trade. This, plus the fact that even a professional buyer may be ill informed, results in such misstatements as "The most popular fabric for underwear is silk, either from the silkworm or of synthetic fibers." Maybe this is the reason why quite reputable stores continue to sell rayon as silk. It must likewise be remembered that the buyer's title is a euphemism; his real job is to sell, to

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build sales and profits. It is therefore understandable that in the discussion of furs we are informed that "the important question for you is, not 'Can I buy a fur coat?' but 'What sort of fur coat shall I buy?' " And on the subject of men's hats, that "really, a man ought to have from six to twelve hats in his wardrobe. . . . Don't wear the same hat too long. Don't try to get the maximum wear out of it, for scarcely any good hat will completely wear out. . . ."

This book should fool only the unwary. Yet it would be a mistake to dismiss it too lightly, for it represents a very real threat to the success of the consumers' campaign. Having failed to regain consumer confidence merely by calling the guinea-pig writers muckrakers, business has become cooperative to the point of preparing buying manuals for consumers. It is the same method that has been used to fight labor organization. The danger here is that unorganized consumers may easily fall victims to the company book.

A far better investment than "The Shopping Guide" for over-the-counter buyers who want to get more for their money is Ray Giles's booklet, "How to Beat the High Cost of Living." At least half of Mr. Giles's suggestions for saving money are obvious; many others, such as his statement that the best value in furniture can be obtained at the highly dramatized February and August sales, quite erroneous; but this still leaves several hundred others from which anyone should be able to find a few practical ways of reducing living costs. Mr. Giles's chapter on housing is excellent, and his checklist for prospective home-owners should be carefully studied by everyone who thinks that some day he would like to own a home of his own.

If proof is needed that the chief concern of business is not the well-being of its customers, little or big, it will be found in "40,000,000 Guinea Pig Children." The book is related to the guinea-pig school of literature only through its title. Names are named where necessary, but the authors' purpose is not to titillate or shock but to instruct. They do not merely list products that are harmful and overpriced; they offer constructive advice on the care and feeding of children. More than one-third of America's children are undernourished, and of this number many live in homes where there is a radio in the living-room, a chicken in the pot, Vitamin D milk in the refrigerator, and a half-dozen boxes of nationally advertised cereals on the pantry shelf, anyone of which is supposed to make little Jimmy the strongest boy in the class and the captain of the football team. Parents who are really interested in making Jimmy strong, even though they are not unduly concerned with his prowess in athletics, should read this book.

Peter Morell has been far less successful in making a real contribution to consumer literature. "Poisons, Potions, and Profits," is a book about the radio—the bad shows and, at greater length, the worthless and dangerous patent medicines and foods which are hawked through them. Unfortunately, the products Mr. Morell names are also advertised in our best newspapers and magazines, and therefore have been exposed by almost every other guinea-pig writer. Mr. Morell brings some of this material up to date by drawing freely from the records of the Consumers' Union, but practically he has added little to what has been said before. The subtitle of his book "The Antidote to Radio Advertising" seems over-optimistic. More than a new food-and-drug law is needed if the radio is really to be operated in the public interest. Mr. Morell should have considered causes as well as results. As it is, he has merely rehashed old stuff, even in the special section at the back of the book described as "startling new material" and inclosed in a band which the buyer may not break until he has purchased the book. This is certainly forcing the consumer to buy a pig in a poke—a good enough merchandising idea but not one that Mr. Morell would be expected to advocate.

Consumers' Union material is used far more effectively in the short movie "Getting Your Money's Worth" now at the Filmarte in New York. How to buy shoes, how Grade B milk compares with premium-priced Grade A, and similar subjects are briefly and interestingly visualized. The picture is presented as the first of a series. It merits, but unfortunately probably will not achieve, wide distribution in the movie houses of the country, for, according to reports, shortly after its first showing in New York certain important business men indicated their dissatisfaction with the frankness of this consumer-sponsored shopping guide. RUTH BRINDZE

"Anacreon" Moore

THE HARP THAT ONCE. By Howard Mumford Jones. Henry Holt and Company. $3.50.

THE MINSTREL BOY. By L. A. G. Strong. Alfred A. Knopf. $3.75.

HERE are two well-printed and brightly jacketed biographies of Tom Moore, both written in a style called "readable" or "informal" and yet both requiring persistent effort to bring the reading of them to a decent close. It may seem curious to find sprightly "Anacreon" Moore uninteresting and flaccid, his lively figure seeming even smaller than before. And I do think it is surprising to find two biographies, both with a cheerful title, rather more than slightly dull. I suspect the first difficulty arose with the mistaken attempt to give Moore stature if not greatness, to assume that the dull society of fashionable London during the Regency had a standard for literature worthy of respect, and that therefore Moore's wide popularity should be perpetuated with affectionate regard. This strange assumption lies at the heart of both "The Harp That Once" and "The Minstrel Boy," but in all fairness it should be said that Mr. Strong's defense of Moore's behavior and poetry is far more sophisticated and far more wary than Mr. Jones's. Yet Mr. Jones has painstakingly collected more information than Mr. Strong, so much so that the opening paragraphs of his chapters are cluttered with the kind of facts that one encounters in H. G. Wells's "Outline of History," a grand medley of what is happening in Europe and America as Moore finds a rich patron or sings a song. In his analysis of Moore's poetry Mr. Jones has the entire history of early nineteenth-century poetry floating on the page; so it is perhaps not at all extraordinary that he sees a resemblance in Moore's Anacreon Ode XLIII to "Kubla Khan," reading its short lines as equivalent to the subtle, interwoven music which is the marked distinction of Coleridge's best style. But his most liberal claim for Moore's excellence is on page 111:

> The brief quotations given from "Irish Melodies" offer the trained ear a wealth of prosodic invention, a treasury of technical resources, which neither Byron or Wordsworth ever acquired, which as sheer craftsmanship must place Moore on a plane with Shelley and Coleridge and Keats in technique, and which in the management of metrical fingering within the line sometimes goes beyond anything that any other romanticist has to show.

Mr. Jones remarks elsewhere that it is useless for criticism to protest that Shakespeare and Shelley—who somehow seem

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grouped together in Mr. Jones's mind—can "better this writing." He is referring to "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms"! Mr. Jones could have saved himself much future embarrassment by reading Gerard Manley Hopkins's commentary on the three schools of nineteenth-century poetry: "The third was the sentimental school, of Byron, Moore, Mrs. Hemans, and Haynes Bailey . . . [they] had the most untrustworthy and barbarous eye for nature; a diction markedly modern; and their keepings any gaud or a lot of Oriental rubbish." And I am still uncertain as to what Mr. Jones means when he speaks of "metrical fingering." Is it musical notation or something far more esoteric? I suspect he means no more than the plain truth that Moore's training at semi-private singing and pianoforte recitals had made him sensitive to the sound of words as they are written within a song, a song sung by himself or a song that John McCormack now performs with such tenor sweetness on twenty-year-old Victrola records. This may well have been an art that pleased the lords and ladies of George IV's dinner parties, or failing that immediate circle, found favor at the great Whig houses of the period, or amused the worldly Byron, or charmed Leigh Hunt. Yet the gift, however significant it may have been in defining the lack of taste displayed by the generation that discovered the aspidistra as an exotic plant imported from the Far East, remains quite as Hopkins saw it.

Nor was Moore's political adventure less shrewd or more worthy than his drawing-room popularity. He not only "loved a lord" but knew how to make a lord love him, and though his position as a Whig swung leftward, though he angered the very Regent whom he once hoped to win as patron, one knows only too well why Robert Emmet spared him the necessity of sharing political secrets when Moore was a young Dubliner. The portrait of Moore in both biographies has remarkable consistency: the lack of deep emotion or genuine insight played its successful part in lampoons of Thomas Jefferson and the painless and bathetic elegy regretting Robert Emmet's death. His associates were amused, flattered, or entertained by his facile gifts of singing, casual conversation, and smoothly flowing verse that carried within it the faintest echoes of Gaelic melancholy, accompanied by the tinkle of the harpsichord or music-room piano.

Moore's life, seen with the cool eye of Peter Quennell in his "Byron: The Years of Fame," could have been made to seem as interesting and as significant as any phenomenon of its kind in literary history. We could then have seen clearly the early and sudden rise to fame, followed by the writing of inept satires and hack biographies, the death of Moore's children, and last, the slow decline into idiocy. The incident of the burning of Lord Byron's "Memoirs" is not a pretty story, yet it fits into the character of Moore's later years and is hysterical action of a kind that prepares for the last scenes of his life. These scenes are less tragic than frightening, for their moral of what happened to a Dublin grocer's son who had become the favorite of London society is all too clear. His lively talents brought with them no ability to mature, and his shrewdly fostered literary fame paid its generous reward in its own coin. His fits of weeping, his loss of memory, his dining at dinner parties where he was not invited are all part of the fading picture. He had been the histrionic laureate of the bourgeois Regency. The story of Tom Moore as the chief drawing-room phenomenon of the society which had made him popular and perhaps immortal is the book that has yet to be written by an intelligent biographer.

HORACE GREGORY

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Shorter Notices

REHEARSAL IN OVIEDO. By Joseph Peyré. Knight Publications. $2.

When Joseph Peyré received the Goncourt Prize in 1935 for his novel "Glittering Death," the French public found its Ernest Hemingway. Peyré deals in violent action and depicts a distinctly masculine world. "Rehearsal in Oviedo"—which, by the way, is a far better title than the original "Homme de choc"—relates a miner's experiences during the bloody Asturian revolt of October, 1934, and the unsuccessful attempt to take Oviedo. After seeing the miners capture the Civil Guard barracks in the hamlet of Arenales under the leadership of Morenú, we must follow them in their march on Oviedo. There we witness the slow destruction of the town, as each surging attack on the cathedral, which the Civil Guard have made their stronghold, falls back in desperation. Morenú's blind faith in the cause suffers from his pity for its victims and from his recognition of its leaders' stupidity, and the end is charged with an implied bitterness. The adjectives tense, stark, robust, powerful, all apply to this novel. Although we know very little of them, the few main characters are alive, the men, as with Hemingway, better realized than the women. One feels that one has been an eyewitness of certain of the scenes—the airplane bombing the town, the dynamiters swinging their rope belts to scatter the crowd, the interior of the hospital, the night patrol. Only remotely a topical novel, "Rehearsal in Oviedo" could be appreciated by those on either side of the present Spanish barricades. The translation by R. H. Torres is excellent. Probably its only flaw is the occasional use of the terms "loyalist" and "rebel," since in 1934 they meant exactly the opposite of what they do today.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

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132 plates $3.75

HARPER & BROTHERS

THE SHARE-CROPPER. By Charlie May Simon. E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.50.

Why should a novelist tell the truth and insist it is fiction? Mrs. Simon's story is a thinly veiled account of the brutality visited on members of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union by the planters. The cotton-choppers' strike, the system of peonage practiced by the authorities in the town of Earle (disguised in the novel as Duke), the disappearance of Frank Weems (rechristened Ephe Darr) after being beaten into unconsciousness, the raid on the home of the union lawyer, C. T. Carpenter (called Abner Young), the mobbing of union attorneys in Forrest City (concealed as Prairie City) are all retold. Yet Mrs. Simon asserts in the foreword that "no living person is referred to in these pages." The author has a great deal of sympathy for the oppressed tenant farmer, and her book is all the more impressive because it is written by a daughter of the South. It is to be regretted that in her didactic paragraphs she reveals no understanding of the economic forces that have victimized the tenant farmers and brutalized the planters. But perhaps that is too much to exact from a novelist when even the federal government shows appalling ignorance in dealing with the landless peasantry of Dixie. Mrs. Simon is too generous in her praise of the Red Cross relief to share-croppers during flood periods, which this reviewer had a chance to observe in the same area early this year. Nevertheless, her story is an honest and fairly successful attempt to report the struggles and hopes of the men and women who make possible the clothes we wear.

AARON LEVENSTEIN

FILMS

Boy Bites Man

A FEW minutes after the beginning of "Nothing Sacred" (United Artists) a strange thing happens. It is not absolutely strange, because it is seen at once to harmonize with its context, and later on indeed it will become the symbol through which the context is remembered. But it is strange in the sense that no spectator could have predicted it; it expresses its context, in other words, so much more perfectly than one would have supposed anything could express it as to come with a shock of delightful and justified surprise. It takes but a few seconds, and it employs no words. It is simply this: a little white-haired boy runs out of a gate past which a man has walked, catches up with him, seizes a trouser leg, turns his head sideways, savagely bites the leg, turns, runs back, scuttles into the gate again, and disappears from the film for good.

The little devil disappears, but he has left his mark on the film, and if it is the clearest of many strong, clear marks left there—for "Nothing Sacred" is among the best films of the year—there must be a reason. I hope I have already hinted the reason by saying that the episode is brief, noiseless, and surprising, and that it expresses a great deal more than itself. It expresses, as a matter of fact, Vermont. The man bitten (Fredric March) is a New York newspaperman who has ventured into a Vermont village in search of a sensational story which will put both himself and his paper —their recent sensations have been exposed as fakes—once

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more on their feet. A girl who works in a watch factory (Carole Lombard) is supposed to be dying of radium poisoning, and the paper must make a lot out of the case—bring her down to New York, maybe, and keep her in the headlines as brave little Moribunda until she dies. Mr. March's reception in the village has been cool up to this point; the "Nopes" and the "Yeps" of the citizens have done a fine job of expressing Vermont's contempt for the metropolitan press, a contempt which, to put it mildly, is shared by Ben Hecht, the author. And the audience has laughed constantly. But the "Nopes" and the "Yeps" are as nothing when the diabolical boy gets to work. Suddenly it is as if the entire film had turned on its hero, or rather as if Mr. Hecht (or William Wellman, the director) had hit upon the one gesture capable of discharging all the venom accumulated in his heart through years of impotently hating newspapers. It is of course not Vermont that the gesture expresses. It is Mr. Hecht, or—more important—the whole of the fable he has set out to tell. How the fable goes after this point, and whether the mood of insane and angry laughter is sustained by Mr. March and Miss Lombard in love, are further questions. Suffice it to say that the first half of "Nothing Sacred," brilliantly unified and successful as it already is, discovers in the boy a perfect device wherewith to sign itself as a work of art; a device, too, which would be usable in no other art than that of the film, the peculiar genius of which has called it forth.

The gaiety of "A Damsel in Distress" (RKO Radio) is of a gentler and more juvenile sort, with no mentality about it to add a dash of bitters. The story, involving chiefly Fred Astaire and Joan Fontaine but also Gracie Allen and George Burns, is misty with many silly lovers' misunderstandings, and does not matter. It is the end that matters; for Mr. Astaire, unable to express his joy at getting Miss Fontaine, runs to nine conveniently arranged drums and beats a wonderful rhythm on them with hands, heels, toes, knees, elbows, and several percussive tools whose names I do not know. There could be nothing better than this, either as poetry or in itself.

MARK VAN DOREN

DRAMA

Laughing Gases

PROFOUND meditation upon the subject of Ed Wynn and upon the esteem in which I have always held him has led me at last to a problem which I submit to the students of aesthetics. Why is it, I wonder, that one's taste in low comedy seems to be so much more arbitrary, so much less clearly related to any consistent complex of tastes or convictions, than one's taste in any other art? With some degree of assurance we can predict what any friend will like in poetry or music or serious drama; with equal assurance we are likely to pass judgment upon any unknown on the basis of such likes or dislikes as he may chance to exhibit; but few would be so rash as either to predict the reaction of a friend to any particular clown or summarily to condemn a fellow-creature for not laughing at an antic which one happens oneself to find laughable. Personally, I should find it hard to respect anyone who did not think "Hamlet" an interesting play. His boredom would tell me too much about him; and wit affords a test almost as sure as tragedy. But even if, as hap-

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pens, I am driven into paroxysms of mirth by the sight of steam emerging from Mr. Wynn's two ears, I can and must admit the right of a certain few of my friends to be unamused, and in theory, at least, am compelled to tolerate their opinion that Eddie Cantor is really funny. We disagree as we might disagree over a liking for garlic, not as we should over a liking for Eddie Guest. One taste seems to imply nothing beyond itself, and the other a great deal.

In the particular instance at present under discussion the majority of the public seems to be on my side, and it is pleasant to report that Mr. Wynn has never been funnier than he is in "Hooray for What" at the Winter Garden. At least it is safe to predict that anyone who has ever liked him before will like him here, and a heavy load of apprehension lifted from my heart when he demonstrated, as he very quickly did, that the years of ungrateful struggle on the radio had left no traces. All the old eagerness is still there; so also are the old earnestness and the old genius for committing the worst blunders at the very moment when he is trying hardest to get through a room or a sentence with the minimum of mishaps. Perhaps he does not giggle as much as he used to in the old days, and certainly he does not giggle as much as he did on the radio; but it is in any event a mistake to suppose that he laughs at his own jokes—or at least at any except the very bad ones. The best slip out despite what appears to be his determination to prevent anything of the sort, and the essence of his method is in his apparent absorption in what he is trying to say or do. Puns and bulls perversely happen in the midst of the general helpless incoherence, and he has always the air of being at least as surprised as the audience is.

The book of the show—by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse—is admirable for its particular purpose, and Mr. Wynn seems never to have been happier than as the inventor of various strange gases which the wicked war lords are determined, against his will, to turn to purposes of destruction. Everything about the production is lavish, with first-rate performers like Paul Haakon to fill in the relatively few moments when Mr. Wynn is not busy, and the whole thing is delightfully brisk, irresponsible, and high-spirited. There is a touch of fine patriotism in the celebration of the greatness of America—with our Rocky Mountains and our Rudy Valleys—and a touch of not too weighty satire on the peace conference as a source of better wars; there are also some ingenious lyrics by E. Y. Harburg—especially the one in which the professional female spy, trying vainly to reconstruct her fall at a diplomatic party, wonders

> Was it the Hennesse
> Made me lose my je ne sais
> Quoi?

But of course the thing which really counts is Ed Wynn back again where he belongs on a stage which has sadly missed him.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

"Pins and Needles" (Labor Stage) is as delightful as it is a surprising experience in theatergoing. Produced and acted by members of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, it is as refreshing as only a good amateur performance can be. It has effective direction and a wealth of fine satire and lively lyrics. "Sing Me a Song of Social Significance," "Four Little Angels of Peace," "One Big Union for Two" should bring Harold J. Rome, the composer and lyricist, to a prominent place among Broadway song-writers. The whole show is reminiscent of the wit and charm of the old Grand Street Follies and Garrick Gaieties.

M. G.

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Letters to the Editors

Treatment or Prevention?

Dear Sirs: The flood of anti-venereal-disease propaganda which has engulfed us during the past six months shows no signs of abating. Clubs, forums, churches, magazines, books, lecturers, and radio programs, both lay and professional, tell of the terrors of syphilis and gonorrhea. Families and friends talk of it at meals. Couples about to be married have blood tests made. But why, in this huge program of diagnosis and treatment, is so little said about preventing venereal disease?

Both syphilis and gonorrhea are easy diseases to prevent. Let me quote from "Military Preventive Medicine" by George C. Dunham, published at the Medical Field Service School, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania:

> The *Trepnonema pallida* [the syphilis organism] is readily killed by exposure outside the body. It can survive for only a short time in body fluids deposited on dishes, drinking glasses, towels, and similar articles. It is easily destroyed by drying and by weak disinfectants, including soap.
>
> The gonococcus is a delicate organism and is easily destroyed by drying and by weak disinfectants . . . ordinary soap, a solution of mercuric chloride, calomel ointment, and a silver salt solution, usually protargol. . . .

If it is a fact that the germs of venereal diseases are easily destroyed, why not call attention to that fact pointedly and give prophylaxis its due? Is it true that health officers and medical men are afraid of being charged with immorality and encouraging sexual promiscuity? If so, then our young people are paying a terrible price, since venereal disease in any form is very damaging physically, very uncertain of absolute cure, very long and expensive to treat.

By all means diagnose and treat the afflicted but also take the logical step of educating to prevent syphilis and gonorrhea in those exposed to infection.

JOSEPH P. RENALD

Chicago, December 4

Why Not Radio Reviewers?

Dear Sirs: Considering the great influence of radio on American thought and life, it seems to me that very little space is devoted to it in newspapers and periodicals. Though it reaches ten thousand times as many persons as the stage, radio goes merrily along without the slightest criticism. It seems almost incredible that there is not one real radio critic in the country, not one professional critic of something which goes on twenty-four hours a day and is heard by most of the population. I wonder how long the stage was in existence before drama criticism developed. An amusing thing is that I tuned in last night and heard somebody reviewing plays. The drama reviewer and the book reviewer are on the air, along with everybody else, but the radio itself is not reviewed.

Though so little is written or published criticizing radio programs, the newspapers are showing a tendency to play stooge to radio. For one thing, they are hiring radio names. Eventually, if this trend continues, the newspaper will be a minor branch of the radio industry.

R. C. O'BRIEN

New York, December 7

Epstein Mutabilis

Dear Sirs: After hearing Abraham Epstein's attack on the Social Security Act, the Social Security Board, and others who are not in full agreement with him at the Colorado Conference of Social Work in Denver, I wonder that *The Nation* should have jumped to his defense editorially in its issue of October 30. At that time you raised the issue of academic freedom because after Mr. Epstein's first lecture in a course on social security at New York University, someone from the New York office of the Social Security Board suggested that his views be supplemented by a speaker representing the government's position.

If Professor Epstein's classroom teaching was like his recent convention talks, it had little of the quality of his scholarly book, "Insecurity: a Challenge to America." Much as the layman may sympathize with his point of view on many social-security problems, Mr. Epstein is not the consistent authority he claims to be. In his testimony before the House committee on January 31, 1935, he asserted that "the old-age provisions are happily all right." Yet the old-age-insurance plan which he then indorsed contained the very pay-roll tax which he now blames for all our economic ills. It is true that the tax rate was afterward increased, but the principle of the pay-roll tax was staring him in the face even as he told the Senate committee on February 6, 1935: "The entire program as presented by the President is the most outstanding and courageous program that has ever been attempted in the history of the world." Later in the year, after the appointment of the board, he referred in the December *Harper's* to "the economically unwise and socially menacing contributory old-age insurance plan."

L. ALLEN BECK

Denver, Col., December 6

Help Underground Germany

Dear Sirs: The growing aggressiveness and prestige of Germany have tended to obscure the importance of the opposition forces within the Reich. But the underground movement has not been crushed by the Nazis. Indeed, the conditions of life created by fascism are building an opposition more surely than oppression or terror can destroy it.

The C. I. O. and the growing militancy of American labor are playing an important role in strengthening the illegal trade-union movement in Germany. The International Relief Association has made possible the publication in Germany of John L. Lewis's anti-Nazi speech delivered at Madison Square Garden last spring, and over 20,000 copies of the pamphlet have been distributed through underground channels. Its effect is testified to in a letter just received by the I. R. A. from the illegal Metal Workers' Union:

> Nothing can describe our satisfaction when we learned that the leader of one of the most important American unions had spoken so vigorously against the bloody Nazi regime. . . . Some of the copies fell into the hands of the Gestapo, but that made the remaining ones all the more precious. We distributed them widely among our colleagues. This voice from our friends in America was the most heartening and encouraging message we have received since the advent of Nazism.

We ask readers of *The Nation* to become members of the International Relief Association (20 Vesey Street, New York City) and thus make possible the wider distribution of this pamphlet and also the provision of aid to the families of imprisoned trade unionists. By helping underground Germany you are striking a blow at fascism.

STERLING SPERO, Vice-Chairman,
International Relief Association

New York, December 9

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Heroes Take Chances

Dear Sirs: As a friend of the loyalist cause in Spain, may I express my regret that *The Nation* gave space to the appeal of Grace Freed asking readers to bring pressure on Secretary Hull to obtain the release of her brother, a loyalist volunteer captured by the rebels. Our State Department has unfortunately hindered Americans from enlisting for loyalist Spain—because it feared that people like Grace Freed would move heaven and earth to entangle the United States in behalf of their relatives if anything went wrong. If it weren't for their activity, Americans could be free (unhampered by their government) to fight for heroic causes. It is questionable whether these volunteers themselves would want to run to Secretary Hull for protection.

MARGARET DUFFIELD

New York, November 27

Money, Goods, and Bankers

Dear Sirs: Your issue of November 20 contains a letter which points out the quite obvious fact that our banking system is permitted to create new money in the form of loan-deposits and to destroy it, when it suits the interests of the bankers, by withholding or calling loans, regardless of what the needs of the nation or the capacity of industry may be or in what dire want consumers may find themselves. The writer fails to go farther, however, and mention the equally obvious fact that what the banking system is doing when it allows loans to be used as a money system, by means of checks drawn against debt-deposits, is to monetize and demonetize at will the *real* credit of the whole nation, that is, its ability to produce and deliver goods and services.

Money itself, regardless of what it is made of, is quite valueless unless it is based on this real credit. If we have more money tokens, in any form, than we have goods and services or the ability to produce and deliver them, we have inflation and rising prices, with a lower standard of living and impaired security. On the other hand, if we have more goods and services or the ability to produce them than we have money symbols to command their delivery, we have deflation and ruinously low prices—also with a poor standard of living and little security. You can have your choice of two evils.

Clearly, a balanced economy would be one which would plan to equalize goods and services, actual and needed, with real buying power in the money distributed to final consumers, and thus make possible a system of "production of plenty for use." But until our collective intelligence and energy become sufficiently active to take this all-important function away from the private banking system and vest it in an agency which shall serve the entire body of the people, bankruptcy for business and industry, and destitution for the masses, will be a constant menace.

ARTHUR GAW

Atascadero, Cal., December 7

Chicago Women Shoppers

Dear Sirs: The League of Women Shoppers has recently organized a unit in Chicago. The state of freedom of the press is such in this city that we were unable to obtain one line of publicity, even so much as to announce our meeting, in any regular newspaper. Only the *People's Press,* our non-partisan labor weekly, which has given freely of its space, has mentioned us.

Those who are interested in fair conditions for labor, who want to aid the organization of women as buyers of 85 to 90 per cent of the consumers' goods in America, and who are willing to aid us in building up a real economic pressure group in this community are asked to communicate with our secretary, Mrs. Jessie Lloyd O'Connor at 455 Birch Street, Winnetka, Illinois, or with me at 5539 Blackstone Avenue, Chicago. If Roosevelt could beat our newspapers, so can we!

ESTHER J. MOHR,
President, the League of Women Shoppers of Chicago

Chicago, December 1

CONTRIBUTORS

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RUTH BRINDZE is active in the groups now seeking a new deal for the consumer, and her book, "How to Spend Money," is a useful volume for the ordinary buyer of consumer goods.

HORACE GREGORY has long had a special interest in Irish history and literature. He is the editor of "New Letters in America."

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